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Vernon Lushington : Practising Positivism

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Vernon Lushington : Practising Positivism

by

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Abstract

Vernon Lushington (1832-1912) was a leading Positivist and disciple of Comte's Religion of Humanity. In *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain* T.R. Wright observed that "the inner struggles of many of [Comte's] English disciples, so amply documented in their note books, letters, and diaries, have not so far received the close sympathetic treatment they deserve." Material from a previously little known and un-researched archive of the Lushington family now makes possible such a study.

After a childhood influenced by the values of the Clapham Sect, Lushington went to Cambridge where he came under the spell of Thomas Carlyle, for whom he worked for a period as an unpaid secretary, and then Auguste Comte whose Religion of Humanity finally replaced any lingering orthodox Christian faith. At Cambridge Lushington mixed with leading Christian Socialists and worked as a tutor at the Working Men's College alongside Ruskin and D.G. Rossetti. Other friends included William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones who Lushington later introduced to Rossetti, an event which triggered the second phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement,

The altruistic Lushington used his legal skills to assist struggling trade union leaders consolidate their cause and his concern for the working classes led him to co-operate with Elizabeth Gaskell in raising funds to assist the struggling Manchester cotton operatives.

It was as a Positivist that Lushington wished to be remembered. This thesis considers the attraction of Positivism for Lushington and his place in its development and spread during the second half of the nineteenth century. Specific areas covered are Lushington's childhood influences, his university life, his relationship with Carlyle and his adoption of Positivism. The thesis then turns to consider how Lushington outworked his new beliefs first in his public life – especially in the area of the Arts, and in then in his domestic role where his enthusiastic embrace of the Religion of Humanity placed severe strains on his marriage.

Acknowledgements

In presenting this thesis, I have received generous help from a substantial number of individuals whom I should like to thank. In the first place, this thesis would not have been possible in the first place had not Richard Norris taken the trouble to contact me and then present me with the Lushington archive. The history of the archive and my acquisition is explained in my Introduction. I am very grateful to my Supervisor Peter Edwards who first suggested that I use the archive as a basis for a thesis. His friendship, encouragement, and enthusiasm have been much appreciated. To my Director of Studies Jenny Hartley and my other Supervisor John Tosh I am also indebted for their energetic scholarly support, their enthusiasm for the project and their patience with me. I have also appreciated their rigorous attitude towards my full and appropriate use of the archive and its presentation in this thesis. Thanks are also due to the Roehampton University for providing occasions for the sharing of my research with other fellow researchers and to the University for generously supporting a short lecture tour, based on my research project, in the USA.

I have received encouragement both to undertake and complete this research from many people both in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. The authors Fiona MacCarthy, Jan Marsh and Claire Tomalin have all given me time to discuss my work and have offered encouragement. Other leading academics and published authors on subjects directly relating to my research with whom I discussed my work either in person or by e-mail include Charles Cashdollar, Christopher Harvie,

Christopher Kent, Mary Pickering and Terry Wright. It was Wright's book "The Religion of Humanity" that provided the challenge to look at Lushington as a Positivist. I also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Martha Vogeler, an expert on the Positivists and author of the seminal work on Frederic Harrison, for her kindness, unlimited generosity, enthusiasm and long-distance "oversight" of my work. Leonard Robertson of Vancouver has generously provided me with copies of the Lushington letters from his Arthur Hughes archive and Judith Bronkhurst has given me her time and expertise regarding the artist Holman Hunt.

Thanks are due to numerous record repositories in particular the staff at the Surrey History Centre where the Lushington archive is now lodged. I have appreciated the Centre's willingness to take me on as volunteer archivist to assist in sorting and cataloguing the archive – an exercise that has yet to be completed. I am also indebted to l'Musée d'Auguste Comte in Paris (and Aurélia Giusti in particular) for allowing me full and unrestricted access to all materials relevant to the English Positivists and for generously allowing me full and free use of its photocopying facilities. I am also grateful to the archivist and staff at Castle Howard for access to Lushington's letters to George Howard. Many libraries and art galleries have also provided much help and expertise including the Bodleian Library, the British Library, Cambridge University Library, the Fitzwilliam Museum, King's College Library, Cambridge, the National Archives, the National Art Library, the National Library of Scotland, and Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

During the course of researching this thesis I have made many new friends who have opened doors and provided me with opportunities to further my research and extend my interest. They include Mark Samuels-Lasner whose collection of British nineteenth-century art and literature at Delaware University is second to none in the USA. David Sorenson of St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia has helped enormously in my research on Lushington and Thomas Carlyle as have Ian Campbell and Ralph Jessop of Edinburgh and Glasgow Universities respectively. Laura Ponsonby welcomed me to Shulbrede Priory and gave me full unrestricted access to the extensive Parry archive the honour of working at Parry's desk. I have also benefited from conversations on the "Intellectual Aristocracy" with William Whyte of St. John's College, Oxford and the Clough family with Gillian Sutherland of Newnham College, Cambridge. Stephen Waddams of Toronto University has assisted me in researching Stephen Lushington.

Finally, and by no means least, I thank my wife Carrie who, with the appearance of the Lushington archive, began to feel that perhaps it was a case of "three people in the marriage". Without her unqualified support and encouragement I could not have completed this thesis.

Contents

Introduction

This thesis is the result of my acquisition of an important, but yet largely unknown, collection of letters and other papers of the nineteenth-century lawyer and aesthete Vernon Lushington, together with material generated by and relating to other members of his family. Until now, Lushington has been a shadowy presence in Victorian studies. The archive offers a variety of interesting possibilities for study not only for enlarging our previously limited knowledge of Lushington and his family, but also, by re-tracing his life and thought, it provides an opportunity to explore through the eyes of a key figure, the religious, intellectual and cultural history of the second half of the nineteenth century. The archive also gives fresh perspectives on a number of well known themes and will open up other fields for future research.

Such is the mass and diversity of material, the necessity of finding a discrete focus for presenting the archive and bringing it into the public domain soon becomes apparent. For example, there is important new material on the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris and Virginia Woolf as well as fresh insights into a number of other well known nineteenth-century figures. However the strongest theme which emerges from the archive, and one which links all other areas of interest, is that of Lushington the Positivist – his chief contributions to the intellectual and cultural history of Britain being found within the development of the British Positivist movement. Although Lushington's place within the Positivist movement has always been known, why and how he chose the

philosophy of Auguste Comte has until now been uncertain. The archive provides material that helps provide answers to questions such as these.

In 1888 A. J. Balfour defined Positivism, in its "wider sense", as:

> That general habit or scheme of thought which, on its negative side, refuses all belief in anything beyond phenomena and the laws connecting them, and on its positive side attempts to find in the 'worship of humanity,' or, as some more soberly phrase it, in the service of man,' a form of religion unpolluted by any element of the supernatural.[1]

This, in essence, was the philosophy of Comte that was adopted by Lushington.

More than a Biography

The impact, challenge and resulting influence of Comte's Positivism on a wide area of intellectual, religious and political thinking in nineteenth-century Britain has long been recognised. Comte focused the minds of a surprisingly large number of prominent Victorians on the possibility of replacing Christianity with an alternative religion based on scientific principles and humanist values which became known as Positivism or the Religion of Humanity. Early in the last century Edward Pease commented "It is difficult for the present generation to realise how large a space in the minds of the young men of the eighties was

[1] A.J. Balfour, *Essays and Addresses* (Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1893), pp. 283-284.

occupied with the religion of Comte."[2] In *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain*. T.R. Wright noted that "the inner struggles of many of Comte's English disciples, so amply documented in their note books, letters, and diaries, have not so far received the close sympathetic treatment they deserve."[3] By using the Lushington archive as its starting place, my thesis is a response to Wright's challenge.

Christopher Harvie has written of the difficulty in appraising the ideology of a particular group in the nineteenth century objectively.[4] He believes that the best approach is biographical. By way of confirmation he added that two of the best studies of the ideology of the nineteenth-century intelligentsia which were then available, namely Annan's *Leslie Stephen* and Richter's *Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and His Age,* were both biographical.[5] To these I would suggest that Gillian Sutherland's book on the Cloughs (2006), and H.S. Jones's study of the nineteenth-century Oxford don Mark Pattison (2007) be added. In introducing her work Sutherland writes, "This study is more than a biography and a family history: it is a case-study so situated to help us follow the evolution and expansion of professional opportunities and roles for the English middle class over almost a century and a half – a crucial period."[6] Of Pattison, Jones writes, "his life was lived too much in the mind for a straightforward biography to be possible. But thought was so intimately bound up with the man that a

[2] E.R. Pease, *The History of the Fabian Society* (A.C. Fifield, 1916), p.14.
[3] T.R. Wright, *The Religion of Humanity: The Impact of Comtean Positivism on Victorian Britain*, (Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 6.
[4] Christopher Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism. University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-86* (Allen Lane, 1976), p.16.
[5] Ibid. pp. 16-17.
[6] G. Sutherland, *Faith, Duty, and the Power of Mind: The Cloughs and Their Circle, 1820-1960* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 2.

monographic study of his thought would be equally unsatisfactory."[7] Sutherland's and Jones's approach to their subjects seemed an ideal model for dealing with Lushington and suggested what Harvie calls a "congenial" framework for exploring the themes covered by this thesis which, to borrow from Jones, "aims to combine a strong biographical framework with a detailed analysis of ideas."[8] In short my thesis is a case study of one of the lesser known figures within the intellectual aristocracy who as a disciple of Comte played a leading part in the development of Positivism in Britain.

Before examining first the steps which led to Lushington becoming a Positivist and then his practical outworking of his faith, I will provide an account of how my interest in both him and other members of his family developed and how the archive came into my hands. I will also provide a general overview of the contents of the archive, highlighting the most important items which, in addition to adding to an understanding of the both the significance and development of Positivism in England, also cast new light on a number of familiar themes and personalities from the last half of the nineteenth century. Although Lushington's place within the intellectual aristocracy and the question of whether or not he experienced a crisis of faith will be more fully considered later in this thesis, brief introductory summaries of the state of religious and intellectual thinking in the second quarter of the nineteenth century; "the intellectual aristocracy"; and "the Religion of Humanity" will be provided. The final section of this chapter is a review of key literature on the themes dealt with throughout the thesis.

[7] H.S. Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England. Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don* (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 11.
[8] Ibid. p. 12.

The "Impatient Few"

The turmoil of belief and unbelief in religious matters in the middle years of the nineteenth century led many churchmen to rethink their theology. Although some conservative Protestants built walls and chose to place their trust in church authority or biblical literalism, others tried to incorporate themes from Positivism into a new, more liberal, theology. However a third group, which Charles Cashdollar has called the "impatient few", felt led to "quit the church and theology altogether for secular pursuits, for science or art or humanity."[9] By choosing Positivism Lushington became one of that impatient few. Cashdollar also noted:

> How Comte's ideas were presented could and did determine how they were, or were not, received. No one entered the process without a prior history. Those who scattered Comte's ideas were not one-dimensional individuals; they were involved in other battles, and they brought with them their lists of enemies and allies. It mattered, then who carried the message of Positivism and what their motives were perceived to be.[10]

As will be seen, Lushington was involved in a number of battles of both an ideological and sociological nature. He may not have been a man of original ideas but he had he had an important role as one who "carried the message of Positivism." My thesis will examine both Lushington's "prior history" and his contribution to the spread of Comte's ideas in the second half of the nineteenth

[9] Charles D. Cashdollar, *The Transformation of Theology, 1830-1890: Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America* (Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 445.
[10] Ibid. p. 13.

century. Lushington was an exemplary model of a practising Positivist and a devotee of the Religion of Humanity.

My thesis will show how Lushington discovered Positivism and how he became an active disciple of Auguste Comte thereby risking both social and political ostracism. Lushington's role within the intellectual aristocracy was to promulgate his new code of belief and find appropriate channels through which to express it in practical ways. The seeds of Lushington's belief, or perhaps more correctly, unbelief, were planted in his childhood and an account of Lushington's early years will be given showing how they prepared the way for his adoption of Positivism. The most formative period in Lushington's mental and spiritual development was his time as a university student and I have given this important period of this life a full chapter looking at the influences upon him at Cambridge. My thesis will also examine what was Lushington's distinctive contribution to the development of the British Positivist movement. Another area for consideration will be how much, if at all, Lushington's journey to Comte and Positivism resulted from a phenomenon peculiar to the intellectual society of mid-nineteenth century Britain – the crisis of faith. The archive also sheds fresh important biographical light upon a number of well known personalities within Lushington's wide and diverse social network. These included artists, writers and musicians of the time such as D.G. Rossetti, John Ruskin, William Morris, Thomas Hardy and Hubert Parry. I will examine his relationship with these and other leading figures in the light of his Positivism.

The central tenet of the Religion of Humanity was what Comte defined as "altruism" - the belief that man had no right to exist for his own sake and that service to others is the only justification of his existence. Having traced Lushington's journey to Positivism, I will then consider how the altruistic spirit found expression in Lushington's life in a variety of areas social concern such as Christian Socialism, the Working Men's College, the consolidation of the Trade Union movement in the 1860s, and then through the work of the London Positivist Committee. Lushington's distinctive and major contribution to the propagation of the Positivist cause was in the area of the Arts and I have included a chapter on that subject drawing upon both his published and unpublished manuscript lecture notes. Finally, given that a large part of the archive consists of correspondence between Lushington and his wife and daughters thereby providing rare glimpses into their family life, consideration will be given to how his commitment to Positivism was worked out within the domestic arena. I have deliberately chosen not to deal with Lushington's legal career except when it touches upon his involvement with the Positivist movement as this would broaden the scope of this thesis too far and would be better dealt with in the format of a separate study.[11]

[11] Shortly before submitting this thesis David G. Raw of Newcastle University contacted me regarding his interest in Lushington's role as an advocate of law reform. This is to form part of his research for his thesis on the mid nineteenth-century 'Condition of England novelists and the laws of compensation'.

The archive: its history and acquisition

I first became aware of the Lushington archive in 1981 when researching the history of a house called Pyports in Cobham, Surrey.[12] The property is one of the most historic houses in the town dating from the sixteenth century. It has been home to a number of interesting, and sometimes nationally important, figures over a period of nearly two hundred years. In the closing years of the nineteenth century it became the country residence of the Lushingtons who rented it from local land agents.[13] By chance one of their neighbours at Cobham was Matthew Arnold who lived at Painshill Cottage, Cobham from 1873 to 1888, and the Lushington and Arnold families frequently visited each other. After reading a number of secondary sources I realised that the Lushingtons had been a family of some distinction with a wide and varied circle of interesting friends which included many well known artists, musicians, writers, and politicians of the nineteenth century.

In an attempt to take my research further I submitted a letter for publication in *Country Life* seeking more information about the Lushingtons. [14] This brought me into contact with the widow of the executor of Susan Lushington, the youngest of Vernon Lushington's three daughters and the last surviving direct

[12] David C. Taylor, *People of Cobham – The Pyports Connection* (Barracuda Books, 1985).
[13] The archive contains a letter from Jane Lushington to her husband dated 18 November 1880 in which, after a visit to the Arnolds, she wrote of the death of their dog, *Geist* adding, with a hint of humour, how Arnold "described Geist's deathbed exactly as if he had been describing his friends – he said it was so 'precisely that of a human' that having lately see his brother die he was struck by the entire similarity 'the struggle for breath then the few last deep breaths & a sigh - & his head fell upon the pillow – he was in Mrs Arnold's bed - & then all still.' Jane added "I could hardly realize that it was Geist we had been talking of." The death of his dog led Arnold to write the poem, Geist's Grave which was first published in January 1881.
[14] My letter appeared in Country Life, 2 July 1981, p. 33, under the heading "Looking for Lushington"

member of the family who died in 1953.[15] Susan cared for her father in his old age and they together eventually moved to Kingsley, near Borden in Hampshire to be near two of Lushington's unmarried sisters. After her father's death in 1912 the family papers passed to Susan and remained with her until her death in 1953. The only person who appears to have had access to the archive during Susan's lifetime was the art historian William Gaunt who stayed with her when writing his book on the Pre-Raphaelites.[16] After Susan's death the papers then passed to her executor who was also her nephew, but he did nothing with them and, following his death, they passed to his widow, Mrs Yvonne Norris.

Unfortunately all attempts to view the archive proved abortive due to a frustrating episode of appointments cancelled by Mrs Norris at short notice on the pretext that it was no longer convenient for her to meet on the appointed day.[17] Despite this I continued with my book on Pyports and included two chapters on the Lushington family. These were drawn largely from secondary sources although I did look at the correspondence of Lushington's eldest daughter Katherine who married the newspaper proprietor Leopold Maxse. [18] My letter to *Country Life* also led to contact with several other people with useful knowledge of the Lushingtons. This led me to visit Kingsley where there were then still of the older residents who could recall how the Lushington's house had remained empty for some while after Susan's death during which time it was

[15] Susan's sisters Margaret and Katherine had both married but died childless in 1906 and 1922 respectively. Katherine, or Kitty, was Virginia Woolf's "Mrs Dalloway". She died by falling over a banister and Woolf rather scurrilously suggested it may have been suicide.
[16] W. Gaunt, *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (Jonathan Cape Ltd., 1942).
[17] My last correspondence with the late Mrs Norris was in December 1992 when she wrote to congratulate me on my book on Pyports and referred to the items still in her possession. I replied and asked her to let me know if she was considering disposing of the archive but did not receive a reply.
[18] West Sussex Record Office, Maxse MSS.

broken into several times and papers and artefacts stolen or strewn about the building. It was remarkable that any of the papers survived.

Following publication of my book on Pyports, I corresponded with a number of people with specialist interests in various members of the family with a view to my publishing a short account of the Lushington family. Amongst those I corresponded with were the late Lady Rosalie Mander of Wightwick Manor, Wolverhampton the author of a biography of D.G. Rossetti who knew something of Lushington.[19] Other useful contacts made at this time were with late Dr Leslie Cowan, an art historian specialising in the Pre-Raphaelites and Judith Bronkhurst, another art historian with a special interest in Holman Hunt.[20] Yet another art historian I contacted was Leonard Roberts whose specialist interest is in the work of the artist Arthur Hughes, another close friend of Lushington and his daughters.[21] Roberts acquired most, if not all, of the correspondence from Hughes to both Vernon and Susan Lushington when it came onto the market some years ago and he has generously provided me with transcripts of most of the material.

Others I contacted at this time were the legal historian Stephen M. Waddams of the University of Toronto, who has since written a book on Vernon's father Stephen, and Brenda Colloms who has written on the Christian Socialists and the

[19] Roslie Glynn Grylls, *Portrait of Rossetti* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1964).
[20] J. Bronkhurst, *William Holman Hunt. A Catalogue Raisonné* (Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art/Yale University Press, 2007).
[21] L. Roberts, *Arthur Hughes: His Life and Works*, *A Catalogue Raisonné* (Woodbridge: ACC Ltd., 1997).

Working Men's' College.[22] During that original period of research I also had the privilege of corresponding with, and eventually meeting, William Holman-Hunt's granddaughter Diana. Her father had been christened Hilary Lushington Hunt in honour of Vernon, and Susan Lushington had been one of her godmothers. Diana Holman-Hunt was particularly interested in my research and generously shared her recollections of the Lushingtons with me.

Over the years that followed my initial contact with Mrs Norris I noticed that material from the Lushington archive would appear on the market from time to time. In 1983 Sotheby's offered for sale a collection of Vernon Lushington's Positivist papers. I contacted the then Surrey Record Office (now the Surrey History Centre) concerning this collection and, with the Deputy Archivist, visited Sotheby's to look at these papers. However, as they did not relate directly to Surrey, their acquisition for the County was not felt justified at that time. Fortunately the papers were secured by Dr Martha Vogeler who was writing a book on another Positivist – Frederic Harrison. Dr Vogeler used the papers to revise Lushington's entry in the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. As a result of several meetings I have had with Dr Vogeler over the past few years, most of those papers have now been given to me to be re-united with the original archive. More papers from the archive, including correspondence of Lushington's father, were offered for sale at Sotheby's in 1986. I informed the Surrey Record Office about this sale and they contacted Stephen Waddams who was particularly interested in some of this material for his book on Stephen Lushington.

[22] Brenda Colloms, *Victorian Visionaries* (Constable & Co.1982) and S.M. Waddams, *Law, Politics and the Church of England. The Career of Stephen Lushington, 1782-1873* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

After the Sotheby's sale of 1986 I heard no more of the Lushington archive or Mrs Norris until early in October 2005 when I received a telephone call from her son. He explained that his mother had died and he was in the process of clearing the house. He had found my correspondence with his late mother and wanted to know if I was still interested in the archive which needed removing from the house. I subsequently made arrangements to collect it two days later. In the intervening period I contacted the County Archivist at the Surrey History Centre, explaining what had happened and it was agreed that an archivist from the Centre would assist in collecting the archive.

When I collected the archive Mr Norris confirmed that, given my interest and earlier research into the Lushingtons, it was his wish that it came into my ownership. However, I explained that I was not happy to have the archive in my home and it was agreed that it would be deposited at the Surrey History Centre in Woking where I would have full and unrestricted access for the purpose of sorting, cataloguing and researching the material. The archive is now at Surrey History Centre where, together with one of the professional archivists, I have helped to sort it and make an inventory of what it comprises.

The archive: its contents

The archive which I received from Mr Norris consists of well over a thousand items.[23] These are chiefly letters between various members of the Lushington

[23] The Lushington archive is now housed at the Surrey History Centre under accession number SHC7854. The cataloguing of all the items in the archive is not yet complete and it has not therefore always been possible always to provide a complete reference for some of the items

family and their correspondents, and reveals the surprisingly large network of friends which they enjoyed. Subsequent to my obtaining the main archive Martha Vogeler handed me most of Lushington's Positivist papers which she had purchased when they were auctioned some years ago and these will be re-united with the main archive. This collection consists chiefly of a large quantity of notes and manuscripts in Lushington's hand which reveals the depth of his obsession for Positivism and the Religion of Humanity. Within this latter collection are notes which Lushington made from the published works of Carlyle and Darwin apparently in preparation of lectures for the London Positivist groups. The actual lectures, if they were ever given, have not survived. An outline catalogue of the main archive has been prepared but only a limited number of the earlier items have been individually itemised and numbered. It is my intention to make a fully annotated catalogue of the entire archive but completion of such an exercise will inevitably take some years to complete and, until that time, the archive cannot be made more generally available to other researchers. It follows therefore that not all items in the archive which are used in this thesis are individually numbered and can only be referenced by box and bundle numbers.

A potential weakness in the archive is the disposal of various parts of it at auction sales over a period of years such as the Positivist papers already referred to. Much of that detached material consisted of items which might have had some commercial value such as the autographed letters from well-known figures of the nineteenth century including Thomas Carlyle and Mrs Gaskell.[24] Even so,

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referred in this thesis. Where an item has not been fully catalogued the accession number are given together with the box and bundle number.

[24] In 2000 Sotheby's sold a collection of over twenty letters to Lushington from a variety of Pre-Raphaelite artists and authors including Gabriel and William Rossetti, Burne-Jones, Holman

what is left remains important in its own right as a source of social and domestic history relating to a family within the professional class of late nineteenth-century Britain. Fortunately most of the detached items are now in catalogued public collections, and I have been able to locate most of them and obtain either photographic copies or transcripts to be placed with the original material. Those items detached from the main archive are, of course, of interest, importance and some commercial value in their own right, particularly with regard to the personality that sent them. However it is only when they are studied within in the context of the main archive that they have real value for scholarly research and can be properly understood. Of course, they also bring a cohesiveness and continuity to the archive as a whole.

A particular strength of the surviving core archive is the large number of letters that passed between Lushington and his wife. These cover the period from immediately before their marriage in 1865 to Jane Lushington's death in 1883, and include such interesting items as Jane's description of her visit to the studio of D.G. Rossetti who was painting her portrait in the year of their marriage.[25] There is also a letter from this same period from Lushington's friend William Holman Hunt inviting Jane to visit him.[26] An important letter from this year which is central to this study is that from Lushington to his fiancé in which he shares his religious doubts.[27] On a more practical note Lushington reminded Jane that "we must go & choose Mrs [Julia Margaret] Cameron's Photos!"[28] Later

Hunt, William Morris and G.F. Watts. Unfortunately I not yet been able to trace the present whereabouts of this important collection.

[25] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 17 August 1865. SHC7854/1/1/14

[26] William Holman Hunt to Jane Lushington. 19 August 1865. SHC7854/1/1/17

[27] Vernon to Jane Mowatt. 4 February 1865. SHC7854/3/1/3

[28] Ditto. 6 February 1865. SHC7854/3/1/4.

letters refer to Lushington's visits to the family of Mrs Gaskell whose friendship led her to refer to him as "Cousin V".[29] Other letters contain material relating to John Ruskin, "the Malthuses" who "dined here last night … he as yr. Father rightly described him – 'raving mad'", and Jenny Lind with whom Jane Lushington sang in the Bach Choir.[30] A particularly interesting letter from 1877 refers to the notoriously unstable relationship of the poet Wilfred Blunt and his wife Annabella. Jane wrote: "Annabella goes on about wanting a boy – she says she implores Wilfred not to go travelling until she can have this 'boy'".[31]

In 1866 and 1867 Lushington was spending a good deal of his time professionally in Liverpool as a Barrister on the Northern Circuit. It was during this time that he developed both professional and personal relationships with some of the newly emerging industrialists such as Frederick Leyland and George Rae who were wisely investing some of their capital in purchasing the paintings of Rossetti and other Pre-Raphaelite painters. It is likely that Lushington influenced the brokering of some of the deals between the artists and their clients.[32] It was also in Liverpool at this time that Lushington first met Julia Jackson, later to be the wife of Leslie Stephen and mother of Virginia Woolf, and, later still, the unofficial adoptive mother of his own three daughters.

Lushington's relationship with Rossetti continued after his marriage and in 1870 he wrote to Jane "We had intended a visit to Rossetti, but he puts us off, having a

[29] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 16 December 1866, SHC7854/3/3/19.
[30] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 1866, SHC7854/1/2/2; 1870, 1/6/14; 1878, 2/2/9
[31] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 1877, SHC7854/2/1/17
[32] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 1866, SHC7854/3/3/5 & SHC7854/3/4/21. The latter contains a description of the house and art collection of the Birkenhead stockbroker George Rae.

mighty picture in hand wh. blocks up the whole room."[33] In 1871 another attempt to visit Rossetti was successful and there he also met his old friend Burne Jones and his wife.[34] Lushington was one of the handful of surviving friends from the early days of the Pre-Raphaelites who was well enough to attend Rossetti's funeral in 1882. After this event Jane wrote to her husband, "Well my dear you have had a fine tho' sad day & I shd. think a very tiring one. There is something both grand & poetical in a grave by the sea - & this is what I hope he has found poor fellow."[35] Any letter which Vernon may have written to his wife describing Rossetti's funeral seems has not survived although he did write a lengthy description of the event to his friend William Bell Scott.[36]

Much of the correspondence between the Lushingtons is of a more prosaic nature dealing with the essential practical and sometimes mundane issues of family life. However a number of these letters also shed valuable light on those perhaps more private matters relating to faith and belief. These will be considered more fully in my chapter on "Domestic Positivism".

A good deal of the material referred to above, together with other items which cast new light on well known personalities, does not relate directly to the subject of my research, and must therefore remain outside the scope of this thesis. It will however eventually open up other fields for future research. Perhaps the two most important collections within the archive which fall into this category are letters from Lushington describing his visits to William Morris at Kelmscott

[33] Vernon to Jane Lushington. SHC7854/3/7/43
[34] Ditto. 1870, SHC7854/3/8/5
[35] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 14 April, 1822. SHC7854/1/3.
[36] *Autobiographical Notes of William Bell Scott* ed. by W. Minto (James R. Osgood, McIlvane & Co., 1892), pp. 317-8.

Manor, and letters from Jane Lushington and her daughters from Talland House, Cornwall where they were staying with the Stephen family. This later collection throws important fresh light upon the background to Virginia Woolf's novel *To The Lighthouse.*

Also within the archive are a number of diaries kept by his youngest daughter Susan from the 1880s onwards. Many of her diaries are extremely detailed and deserve publication in their own right given their insights into the life of an artistic and literary family such as the Lushingtons at the end of the nineteenth century. Susan and her sisters were talented musicians and spent a good deal of time in the home of their family friend and London neighbour Hubert Parry: there is much in the diaries to interest any scholars researching the composer's life.

In order to make an effective evaluation of his life and work it is necessary to consider Lushington within the broader context of the nineteenth century and, in particular, two aspects of the intellectual and sociological development of his day. First there is the emergence in the nineteenth century of "the intellectual aristocracy". The historian G.M. Trevelyan believed that a proper understanding of the last half of Queen Victoria's reign was best obtained by a study of this group. Secondly there was the Victorian "crisis of faith", an experience through which many of the leading intellectuals passed during the middle years of the nineteenth century.

The "Intellectual Aristocracy"

It was Noel Annan who defined as "the intellectual aristocracy" of late nineteenth-century Britain as "that stratum of 19th century English society, which by its intellectual prowess and spirit of philanthropy and enterprise formed a distinct elite" which "gradually spread over the length and breadth of English intellectual life criticising the assumptions of the ruling class above them and forming the opinions of the upper middle class to which they belonged."[37] Lushington, like many of those who became Positivists, was firmly rooted within that group and, as such, he had a remarkable ability to be accepted as a networker par excellence at many levels.

T.W. Heyck has written that a man was considered to be an intellectual when "he is occupied with theory and principles rather than with practice, often with the further implication that his theories are concerned mainly with abstract matter: he is aloof from the world, and especially is a man of training and culture who cares little for the ordinary pleasures of sense."[38] However Lushington's brand of intellectuality fits other definitions of 'intellectual' quite well – particularly the intellectual as engaged rather than aloof. Lushington threw himself into a diversity of social actions and, as for caring little for the ordinary pleasures of sense, he had a lifelong passion and belief in the importance of the creative arts

[37] Although it was Annan who first defined the intellectual aristocracy and brought its existence to a wider public audience, the actual phrase was first used as early as 1859 in George Meredith's *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel.* This was brought to Annan's attention in a letter dated 12 January 1985 from Andrew McNeillie. Annan acknowledged this when he wrote "George Meredith, whose novels were much admired by the discerning among the intellectual aristocracy, was the first to use the term. But he did not use it as a term of praise. He used it to highlight the dangers of meritocracy." (King's/PP/NGA/1/1/).

[38] T.W. Heyck *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (Croom Helm 1982), p. 23, n.14.

which brought him into contact with the leading artists, writers and musicians of his time. Art was seen as an important agent of the transition from the Christian to the Positivist era. In 1865 Lushington wrote to his wife:

> For indeed whatever Jane Elliot said the other morning of Music, that it had no relation to goodness, is the saddest of errors. Music and Art, and Nature, & whatsoever is lovely in this world, have a true message to us of Love, which means & includes all good; and if we do not receive good from them, it is wholly our fault or our misfortune. This truth goes to the very root of all judgement of men & things.[39]

Lushington's use of the Arts within Positivism will be fully discussed in a later chapter.

Annan's original paper on "The Intellectual Aristocracy" is claimed to have broken all Citation Index records for an historical article.[40] Despite this, some fifty years later, in his paper entitled "The Intellectual Aristocracy Revisited" William Whyte still believed that it was "a real social group and a social group that repays revisiting."[41] As well as providing for the first time the possibility of studying Lushington the Positivist, the newly available archive provides an opportunity to take up Whyte's challenge to revisit the intellectual aristocracy

[39] Vernon to Jane Lushington. 1865, SHC 7854/3/1.
[40] Stefan Collini, *English Pasts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). Annan's essay formed part of a Festschrift for his fellow historian G.M. Trevelyan. It was later published in J.H. Plumb, ed., *Studies in Social History* (London: Longmans, 1955) and reprinted in Noel Annan, *The Dons* (London: Harper Collins, 1999).
[41] This paper was first presented to the Oxford Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century British History Seminar and later published in the *Journal of Victorian Culture*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Spring 2005 (Edinburgh University Press).

and its workings and to look at Lushington's role in the dissemination and practical outworking of emerging new patterns of thought such as Positivism. In 1866 Matthew Arnold wrote pessimistically:

> It is now more than fifteen years since I exhorted my young literary and intellectual friends, the lights of Liberalism, not to be rushing into the area of politics themselves, but rather to work inwardly upon the predominant force in our politics – the great middle class – and to cure its spirit. The great Parliamentary machine has gone creaking and grinding on … and there one sees them now, helping to grind – all of them zealous, all of them intelligent, some of them brilliant and leading. What has been ground, what has been produced with their help? Really, very much the same sort of thing which was produced without it. [42]

However, Annan suggested that it was, in fact, members of the intellectual aristocracy who "formed the opinions of the upper middle classes to which they belonged". This is borne out by Henry Byerley Thomson, who, in 1857, wrote: "The importance of the professions and the professional classes, can hardly be over-rated, they form the head of the great English middle class, maintain its tone of independence, keep up to the mark its standard of morality, and direct its intelligence."[43] Contrary to Arnold's fear, Lushington did not rush into politics. Instead he chose what Arnold argued for. He sought to "work inwardly upon the predominant force in politics – the great middle class – and cure its spirit" through new expressions of belief, social action and cultural expansion.

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[42] Matthew Arnold, 'The Nadir of Liberalism' in *Nineteenth Century*, vol. xix May 1886, p. 645.
[43] H. Byerley Thomson B.A., *The Choice of Profession. A Concise Account and Comparative Review of the English Professions* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1857), p. 5.

The Crisis of Faith

The development of Biblical criticism and the rise of scientific geology in the middle years of the nineteenth century added to the growing doubt concerning the literal truth of the Bible. Added to this, the failure of the churches to respond adequately to the growing social crisis of the period caused many to question traditionally held beliefs. Thomas Carlyle, sage and prophet of the Victorian era, who "brooded over the early reading of a whole generation of troubled souls",[44] wrote: "The Old has passed away but, alas, the New appears not in its stead; the Time is still in pangs of travail with the New."[45] These few simple, but well-chosen, words neatly encapsulate the *zeitgeist* of the middle years of nineteenth-century Britain that was clearly having its effect on Lushington and his contemporaries. Carlyle's theme was later taken up by Matthew Arnold in his "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse", when he wrote of "Wandering between two worlds, one dead, the other powerless to be born." The dead was the old world of faith and "the other" is the "Higher Truth".

In 1831, some six years before Victoria came to the throne, John Stuart Mill in *The Spirit of the Age*, considered that "mankind have outgrown old institutions and old doctrines, and have not yet acquired new ones". Positivism was to offer new philosophical, religious and political agendas. W.E. Houghton in *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, in a clear reference to Arnold, wrote that "Though the Victorians never ceased to look forward to a new period of firm convictions and established beliefs, they had to live in the meantime between two

[44] Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists, Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930*, (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991), p. 74.
[45] Thomas Carlyle, Characteristics, Essays, 3, 32.

worlds, one dead or dying, one struggling to be born, in an age of doubt." It has long been known that Lushington was one of a large number of young men who sought for other philosophies to replace either lost or damaged faith, but until the emergence of this archive, little has been known of his own personal journey.

The Religion of Humanity

Lushington's spiritual journey led him first to Carlyle, to whom he volunteered his services as unpaid secretary for a short period, and then to Comte's Positivism which held that man should rule his life on scientific, not metaphysical, principles, and that the worship of God should give way to that of humanity. Lushington's generation was "a generation that still sought answers to its problems in religious forms, but which at the same time found the traditional religious formulas unsatisfying."[46] For Lushington and other intellectuals like him, the answers lay in Positivism.

In addition to finding answers to questions concerning Lushington's journey to Positivism, this study will also examine what it was that led Lushington away from the broad church Anglicanism of his father to the Religion of Humanity. Comte's Positivism provided its first readers with a recognizable parable about the need to "live for others" and concentrated on the duties of altruism to those of inferior socio-economic rank. Lushington inherited an abiding sense of duty to humanity from his father who had championed the abolition of slavery and other

[46] A.L. LeQuesne, *Carlyle* (Past Masters, OUP, 1982), p. 59.

social causes. Positivism helped to sharpen, define and give further reason for such public spiritedness.

Altruism lay at the centre of Positivism and the Religion of Humanity. It can be defined as an individual's moral obligation to serve others and place their interests above one's own, and it was this that became Lushington's driving force. The Hammonds wrote that religion was "what a man does with his solitariness, and in this sense it may be as self regarding as any other activity. It may take a man no further than his own shadow. For it may take him from his material cares and ambitions to plunge him in meditations in which his own life in a different aspect is still the centre."[47] The Hammonds also observed that there is also a sense in which "religion is not what a man does with solitariness, but what a man does with his gregariousness". Lushington was never a solitary figure. He spent his life in a circle of likeminded friends and colleagues with whom he took every opportunity to share the gospel of Positivism.

Literature Review

There is an almost complete absence of literature dealing specifically with Vernon Lushington and his role within the intellectual, spiritual and political development during the time in which he lived. What little can be found is chiefly in works relating to better known figures from the nineteenth century and it is here that Lushington will usually appear as a footnote.[48] Vogeler's entry in

[47] J.L. & B. Hammond, *The Bleak Age* (Pelican Books, 1947), p. 123.
[48] Works which I have consulted include Noel Annan's *Leslie Stephen – The Godless Victorian* (1984) and the definitive biographies of John Ruskin, William Morris and D.G. Rossetti by Tim Hilton, Fiona McCarthy and Jan Marsh respectively. With regard to the last two, I have also

the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography must form a starting point for any study on Lushington but she was of necessity restricted to a brief factual account of his life and career drawn primarily from secondary sources. However because Vogeler possessed a quantity of Lushington's positivist papers, which she had acquired when they came onto the market, she was also able, perhaps for the first time, to properly draw attention to Lushington's role in the development of Positivism.

Given the paucity of published material concerning Lushington, there has been little for me to critique. This thesis must therefore be offered as the first full account of Lushington's life not just as a Positivist but also within the broader world of the nineteenth-century intellectuals. My questions have related to the issues of the appeal of Positivism to Lushington and how he outworked his new beliefs in his daily life. Lushington's role as a propagator of Positivism is also an important and, until now, largely unrecognised fact. My reading has largely consisted of material relating to the culture and philosophy of the second half of the nineteenth century especially that related to the different themes I explore. Such material can be usefully divided into four specific areas. In the first place there is the literature relating to the development of intellectual and political ideas in the nineteenth century. This is the world of the intellectual aristocracy in which Lushington moved. Secondly there is the literature relating to the ferment

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benefited from discussion with the authors who have generously given me their time and expertise. In dealing with Lushington's friendship with Edward Burne-Jones I have turned to Georgiana Burne-Jones' *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones.* Finally I have made good use of Stephen Waddams' excellent legal biographical study of Stephen Lushington, *Law, Politics and the Church of England. The Career of Stephen Lushington 1782-1873* in seeking to understand the influences on Vernon Lushington in his early years as well as understanding the ecclesiastical controversies of the middle years of the nineteenth century which Vernon faced at University and in the early days of his own legal career.

around Carlyle and resultant challenges to religious thinking of the day - especially the crisis of faith experienced by many in the middle years of the century. This leads to literature on Comte, Positivism and its English adherents. Finally there is the area of the arts including Pre-Raphaelitism in the development of which Lushington, albeit unwittingly, was to play a key role.

Intellectuals and Ethics

Nearly a century has passed since Lytton Strachey "decided with a flourish that we knew too much about the Victorian era to view its culture as a whole."[49] However, the steady stream of books that have appeared since then has proved him to be wrong. As early as 1929, D.G. Somervell in his *English Thought in the Nineteenth Century* undertook a review of the development of intellectual and political ideas of the period. Although superseded by many other books on the subject this book provides an excellent and easily readable overview linking history and events to the literature of the period and covers a number of the themes touched upon in this thesis. Somervell was followed in 1949 by Basil Willey's *Nineteenth Century Studies* which covers very much the same material but more biographically than thematically. Two chapters in this book have particular relevance for this study. These are on Carlyle - his religion and his moral and political ideas; and Comte - his Positivist Philosophy and the Religion of Humanity.

[49] Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (Yale University Press, New Haven and London, 1958), p. xiii.

In 1952 Gertrude Himmelfarb published *Victorian Minds. A Study of Intellectuals in Crisis and Ideologies in Transition*. This scholarly work broke new ground by challenging traditionally held concepts that the Victorian age "had once conjured an image of smugness, hypocrisy, and mindlessness". Himmelfarb shows that it was, in fact, quite the reverse with its high intellectual, moral and spiritual tensions. Himmelfarb also explains and develops the links between the great minds of the nineteenth century such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, Carlyle and Comte and her chapter on "The Victorian Angst" has proved particularly helpful. Himmelfarb's book remains as relevant today as it was when first published and is one reason why it remains in print. In 1957 Walter E. Houghton produced *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*. In many ways this covers similar ground to Himmelfarb but whereas Himmelfarb chose to look at her subject largely through some of the great names of the nineteenth century, such as Burke, Bentham, Mill and Leslie Stephen, Houghton considers his material under the heading of "Emotional", "Intellectual" and "Moral Attitudes". A particularly useful chapter is that on Earnestness, a very Victorian attribute possessed by Lushington.

In 1964 Melvin Richter's important work *The Politics of Conscience: T.H. Green and His Age* was published. Richter traces the origins of Green's agnosticism back to the time of the evangelical revival of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Despite the fact that Green believed that there exists in every society a good common both to individuals and to the whole, he took the opportunity of differentiating this from the altruism of Comte's Religion of Humanity. Green was unable to accept Comte's new religion as he believed that

the object of religion requires for worship nothing les than a living personality and not an abstraction created by the intellect. Richter's work was followed by two books which I have found particularly helpful in researching for this thesis. These are Christopher Harvie's *The Lights of Liberalism: University Liberals and the Challenge of Democracy 1860-1886* (1976) and Christopher Kent's *Brains and Number: Elitism, Comtism, and Democracy in Mid-Victorian Britain* (1978). Harvie's book considers the, with other influences, that of Comte in the development of the "ideology of university liberalism" in the second half of the nineteenth century. Kent draws attention to Comte's influence upon "the core of a generation of academic radicals" in the middle years of the nineteenth century. He writes "The very fact that its full adherents were predominantly upper middle-class university graduates suggests a distinct resonance with the concerns of the mid-Victorian intellectual establishment.[50]

Continuing the theme of intellectualism in the nineteenth century, T.W. Heyk's *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (1982) goes behind some of material covered by Harvie and Kent to look at the emergence of "the intellectuals" in the second half of the nineteenth century. More recently several major texts have appeared dealing with political thought and intellectual life in the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. These are Stefan Collini's *Public Moralists* (1991), David Newsome's *Godliness & Good Learning. Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (1961) followed by his *The Victorian World Picture* (1997)

[50] Kent, p. 56. Both Harvie and Kent's books were reviewed by Professor Peter Stansky of Stanford University in 1978 and 1979. In his review of Kent (*Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 10, No. 1. (Summer, 1979), pp. 171-173) Stansky makes the point that Harvie's decision to call the group "university liberals" is probably more accurate than Kent's opting for "university radicals".

and, finally, History, *Religion and Culture. British Intellectual History 1750-1950* (2000) edited by Collini, Whatmore and Young.

In 2008 the Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies published thirteen papers on subjects related to a variety of ethical issues of the Victorian period given at a conference on *Victorian Ethics*. These included a paper given by me on "Filling the Void: Vernon Lushington, the Crisis of Faith, and the Ethics of Positivism".[51]

Carlyle and the Religious Crisis

Despite the mass of literature relating to Carlyle and his impact on the nineteenth century only one scholar recognised the importance of Lushington. After Carlyle's letters to Lushington were acquired by the National Library of Scotland the Carlyle scholar K.J. Fielding noted of Lushington's relationship with Carlyle that "There is a subject here for further enquiry". [52] Yet again any attempt to take such enquiry further was hampered by the lack of material into which Carlyle's letters could be contextualised. Carlyle's literary outpourings had an enormous impact on young intellectuals like Lushington.[53] Carlyle is often seen as triggering a crisis of faith in many of these young men. Traditionally accepted hypotheses for what is generally labelled the "Crisis of Faith" of the middle years of the nineteenth century have been challenged and revised in recent years and

[51] *Victorian Ethics*, ed. by Nathan Uglow, Leeds Working Papers in Victorian Studies, Volume 10, (2008).
[52] Kenneth J. Fielding, "Vernon Lushington: Carlyle's Friend and Editor", *Carlyle Newsletter* 8 (1987), pp. 7-18.
[53] David Taylor, '"There is subject for further enquiry here": Vernon Lushington and Thomas Carlyle', *Carlyle Studies Annual*, No. 24 (St. Joseph's University Press, Philadelphia 2008) pp. 85-99, is my response to Fielding's call for "further enquiry". A sequel to that paper based on a letter from Lushington to Elizabeth Barrett Browning in which he describes a visit to the Carlyles when John Ruskin was also present, will appear in the next edition of the Annual.

two books in particular have made an important contribution in this area. The first, which appeared in 1990, was *Victorian Faith in Crisis: Essays and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Beliefs* edited by R.J. Helmstadler and B.L. Lightman. This has two especially helpful chapters, "Theodicy and Society: The Crisis of the Intelligentsia" by James R. Moore and "The Victorian Crisis of Faith as Crisis of Vocation" by Jeffrey von Arx. Three years later, in his *Contesting Cultural Authority – Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life,* Frank M. Turner picked up the theme of "Victorian Faith in Crisis" and, in particular, he devotes a chapter to what he calls "The crisis of faith and the faith that was lost".

The crisis of faith is approached through the genre of the Victorian novel in Robert Lee Woolf's *Gains and Losses. Novels of Faith and Doubt in Victorian England* (1977). The Victorian novel often provides a colourful and approachable insight into many of the social and religious issues of the day and helped communicate them in such a way as to reach a wide audience. In my chapter on "Domestic Positivism" I have made particular reference to Mrs Humphry Ward's *Robert Elsmere* which was one of the best selling novels of its time. Woolf's book provides a helpful critique of nineteenth-century novels dealing with belief and belief across the spectrum from Roman Catholicism through High and Low Church Anglicanism to the dissenting churches and, finally, "No Church" or varieties of doubt. The section on the Broad Church of Anglicanism has been particularly useful in understanding Lushington's background – especially the section on the "Cambridge Network" which also

contains material on W.J. Conybeare who was Lushington's tutor before he went up to Cambridge.[54]

Positivism and the Positivists

There have been a number of historical accounts of Positivism published since the early years of the last century but only a few make any reference of Lushington. However they have all proved important in understanding the attraction and spread of Positivism particularly in the last half of the nineteenth century. One of the earliest retrospective volumes on Positivism in this country was E. McGee's *A Crusade for Humanity – The History of Organised Positivism in England* (1931) which was followed by the publication in the June 1936 edition of *The American Sociological Review* of a well researched article by Gladys Bryson on "Early English Positivists and the Religion of Humanity". Nearly thirty years later, in 1963, W.M. Simon's *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History*, (1963) appeared. This contained a useful chapter entitled "England: Sympathisers and Others". Royden Harrison's *Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics 1861-1881 (1965)* contains a useful chapter on *The Positivists: A Study of Labour's*

[54] There are two more general, but extremely useful, works of reference dealing with issues relating to belief and unbelief in the nineteenth century. These are Alec Vidler's *The Church in an Age of Revolution* which was first published as part of the Pelican History of the Church in 1961, and *Religion in Victorian Britain, Vol. IV Interpretations,* edited by Gerald Parsons. *Interpretations* is a collection of papers on issues such as "Church Problems and Church Parties", "The Mind of Victorian Orthodoxy: Anglican Responses to 'Essays and Reviews', 1860-1864", "The Warfare of Conscience with Theology", and "Victorian Ethics of Belief: A Reconsideration."

Intellectuals. In 1967 Warren Sylvester Smith published *The London Heretics 1870 – 1914* which includes a helpful introduction to the London Positivists.[55]

The standard work on Comte and the starting point for any study of Positivism is Mary Pickering's monumental three volume *Auguste Comte: An Intellectual Biography*. The first volume appeared in 1993 and covers the period from Comte's birth to the completion of his *Cours de philosophie positive*. The second and third volumes only appeared as I was completing my thesis. Nevertheless I have found them enormously helpful as I have revised my work and provided a very digestible account of Comte as a man, his struggles, his period of madness, his relationship with his wife and with Clothilde de Vaux, and his work. Although there is nothing on Lushington in any of these volumes, there is much which helps contextualise his life within the development of Positivism and the Religion of Humanity. In particular Pickering's view is that Comte always emphasized the importance of the emotions and distrusted the scientific approach that now is paradoxically associated with Positivism. In doing this she demonstrates that Comte's later religious period which culminated in the Religion of Humanity, did not constitute a break with his early beliefs but followed as a logical outcome. It was this emotional and artistic side of Comte's work that had such a strong appeal to Lushington.

Although Positivism as a philosophy and the Religion of Humanity might now be considered by some as obscure products of the nineteenth century with little relevance for today, there remains one very important and perhaps largely

[55] W.M. Simon, *European Positivism in the Nineteenth Century: An Essay in Intellectual History* (Cornell University Press, 1963), Warren Sylvester Smith, *The London Heretics 1870 – 1914* (Constable, London , 1967).

unrecognised legacy. This is the impact of Comte on the shaping of theological development in the nineteenth century, particularly as a result of the crisis of faith. Comte's Religion of Humanity may have failed as a cause in itself but it presented enough of a challenge to lead theologians to undertake major reviews in areas of doctrine and social policy, incorporating what they perceived as the Christian aspects of Positivism, so that the church could survive into the following century. A work devoted entirely to this aspect of Positivism is Charles D. Cashdollar's *The Transformation of Theology, 1830-1890: Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America*. Cashdollar identifies Positivism as "the most fundamental of the proliferating challenges to religious belief." The author presents a strong argument for how the encounter with Positivism brought major changes to Protestant orthodoxy which remain to this day. He also highlights the importance of ethical concerns to Positivists, this being one reason that people such as Lushington could no longer accept even the theology of the Broad Church.

One of the influential voices of the second half of the nineteenth century considered by Cashdollar is the Scottish theologian Edward Caird who had a great respect for Comte.[56] Caird would almost certainly have known Lushington through The Century Club of which they were both members. In dealing with the impact of Comte in the British universities Cashdollar is of the opinion that Cambridge lacked "the one extreme of ecclesiastical conservatism" and that, as a consequence, it "apparently failed to nurture the opposite extreme as well." He continues "Not until Maurice, Westcott, Hort, and J.B. Lightfoot were all

[56] E.Caird, *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose & Sons, 1885).

assembled in Cambridge in the 1870s did positivism really become a creative part of theological discussion there."[57] I would suggest that Cashdollar's historiography regarding Cambridge may now require some revision as Lushington emerges as a key player in the introduction of Positivism there in the 1850s. In commenting on "Comtists" and "Positivists", Cashdollar writes "Perhaps the sensible thing would have been for writers to use one term, perhaps "Comtists," when referring to one of Comte's strict disciples and to allow "positivist" to stand for the less specific, general tendency."[58] However Lushington, "a strict disciple", made it clear that he was a Positivist and not a Comtist.

During the course of my researching this thesis Thomas Dixon published *The Invention of Altruism. Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain*. In his book Dixon traces what he calls "the language of altruism" as it spread through British culture during the second half of the nineteenth century and beyond. Dixon, like Cashdollar, succinctly argues that Comte and his Religion of Humanity has left a legacy today.[59] His book provides a very helpful assessment of the development of Positivism and its importance in setting an agenda for debates about science and religion in the nineteenth century. Following on from Cashdollar, Dixon provides a particularly useful chapter on "Death and Immortality" which specifically deals with the Christian response to Comte's altruism.

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[57] Cashdollar p. 90.
[58] Ibid., p. 17.
[59] In 2001 Andrew Wernick published *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity. The Post-Theistic Program of French Social Theory*, an important in-depth critique of Comte's concept of religion and its place in his thinking on politics, sociology and philosophy of science. Although more a theoretical guide to Comte, this book has been useful in my study for understanding Comte and his philosophy. 2002 saw the publication of Scharff and Pippin's *Comte After Positivism* which, again, is very a theoretical study and, like Wernick's underlines the relevancy of Comte and his philosophy today.

Another book published as I was nearing completion of my thesis is Vincent Guillin's *Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill on Sexual Equality*. Although much of this book is of a scientific nature it does help clarify how Mill and Comte viewed the role of women. Guillin writes how Comte needed to have "positive proof of their [women's] intellectual inferiority, which certainly had, in his eyes, more to do with the physiology of their brains than with that of reproductive organs."[60] This has helped in my understanding of Lushington's views on the role of women and, in particular, his relationship with his wife.

Individual biographies of Lushington's fellow Positivists have helped me understand the sometimes complex pioneering journey which was undertaken by the first disciples of Comte. After Frederic Harrison, the earliest was by Malcolm Quin, formerly head of the Positivist Community in Newcastle upon Tyne, who published his autobiographical *Memoirs of a Positivist* in 1924. The importance of this volume lies in it being one of the very few autobiographies of a pioneer Positivist. Quin's graphic tracing of his own journey from orthodox Christianity to the Religion of Humanity bears a remarkable similarity to that of Lushington. Like Lushington, Quin was raised in "a household of easy-going Anglicanism." He had no "black Calvinism" to frighten him. "Hell and damnation were not thrust at our young souls. We had no marked sense of sin."[61] However, unlike Lushington who remained a Positivist until his death, Quin lost his "Positivist

[60] V. Guillin, *Auguste Comte and John Stuart Mill on Sexual Equality. Historical, Methodological and Philosophical Issues* (Brill, Leiden/Boston, 2009), p. 73.
[61] M. Quin, *Memoirs of a Positivist* (George Allen & Unwin, 1924), p. 28.

faith" in his later years and returned to the fold of the Christian faith finding his spiritual home within the Roman Catholic church.[62]

In 1976 Marcella Carver produced the slim volume *A Positivist Life* - a personal memoir of her father William Knight. Knight had a great admiration for Lushington especially when the latter offered to travel with him by underground third class "saying he as often came by that as the other – for which I hope he may be forgiven." Martha Vogeler's *Frederic Harrison: The Vocations of a Positivist* (1984) was exactly that and, for the first time, provided a thoroughly researched, in-depth, objective, biographical study of one of the foremost leaders of Positivism in England.[63] Just as the appearance of the Lushington archive has prompted this thesis; it was the availability of the Harrison archive that enabled Vogeler to produce her detailed biographical study.

Pre-Raphaelitism

Marcia Werner's *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism* importantly reconsiders and revises our understanding of Pre-Raphaelite painting by looking at its philosophy, its sources, its cohesiveness, and its relationship to the broader context of European Realism. She examines previously neglected contemporary intellectual and philosophical sources related to Pre-Raphaelitism such as the works of Mill and Carlyle and is one of the first scholars to have recognised the importance of Lushington's essay on Carlyle in *The Oxford and*

[62] M. Quin, *The Future of Positivism. A Public Letter addressed to Monsieur Auguste Paul Edger, Secretary of the Execution Testamentaire d' Auguste Comte* (T.M. Grieson, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1927).
[63] Vogeler acknowledged that her work would not have been possible had she not been given the extended loan of Harrison's papers which include some 1,200 letters to his wife.

Cambridge Magazine which reveals the strong influence of Carlyle upon the Pre-Raphaelites providing them with a theology for their work. Werner notes that "Lushington's observation that, for Carlyle, fact has the power to unify the past and present carries extremely important implications for Pre-Raphaelite painting and its focus on factual accuracy and historical interrelation."[64]

Although published over sixty years ago, Gaunt's pioneering *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* remains an important study because of the time he spent time with Susan Lushington when researching the book. Not only did she allow him access to her father's papers but he also received from her first hand accounts of that remarkable group of artists and her father's relationship with them.

G.M. Young wrote "Victorian history is the story of the English mind employing the energy imparted by the Evangelical conviction to rid itself of the restraints which Evangelicalism had laid on the senses and the intellect; on amusement, enjoyment, art; on curiosity, on criticism, on science."[65] Lushington may not have felt those restraints upon his personal life but his spiritual journey to Positivism via Carlyle undoubtedly reflects such a conviction and his story is a microcosm of Victorian intellectual and cultural history.

Note on Referencing

I have adopted the referencing styles recommended by the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Only the first reference in the thesis to a publication

[64] M. Werner, *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism* (Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 126.
[65] G.M. Young, *Portrait of an Age* (Phoenix Press, 2002), p. 5.

gives full details. After that only the author's surname and page number(s) is given. Where there are more than one publication by a particular author, this is indicated by year of publication.

- 2 -

Formative Years

Before considering how and where Lushington first became aware of Comte and Positivism it will help to look back before that and ask what, if any, were the moral and spiritual foundations laid in his early years and how they might have prepared the way for the choices he made later in his life. Of particular importance is the role of his father, Stephen Lushington, an ecclesiastical lawyer who, as Dean of Arches, was called upon to pass judgement in many of the issues at the core of the religious turmoil of the mid-nineteenth century. How, if at all, did this eminent lawyer impact on his son's early development and the household in which he was raised? What was the faith of Stephen Lushington and his ancestors?

A Distinguished Family

Lushington was very much a product of his family and the circles in which his family moved. He was born on 8 March 1832, at 2 George Street, Westminster, the fourth son of Stephen Lushington and Sarah Grace Lushington nee Carr and was an identical twin. In addition to physical appearance Vernon and his brother Godfrey also shared a similar nature and temperament. A family legend has it that the Lushingtons were once the Lusignans, ancient kings of Jerusalem and related by marriage to the Plantagenet kings, Henry II and John. That they were of the landed gentry with an ancestry that could be traced back to fourteenth-

century Kent is certain.[1] The Lushingtons usually chose either the law or the church for their profession. Thomas Lushington (1590-1661) was a noted author and theologian who was said to be "Audacious in the pulpit and unconventional out of it."[2] Thomas was a Socinian, a follower of a religious society that developed around the time of the Reformation who believed that Christ was subordinate to God the father, and "far from being a substitute for the sins of humanity, Jesus is the bringer of good news and forgiveness, the exemplar of God's love for mankind."[3] This view was similar to that held by the Unitarians and not unlike a view that was echoed by his descendant Vernon Lushington some two hundred years later.

Lushington's father traced his direct ancestry back to Stephen Lushington (1675-1718) of Rodmersham, near Sittingbourne, and Norton Court, near Faversham, Kent, son of Thomas Lushington 1628-1688 who had been made heir of the Reverend Thomas Lushington. Stephen Lushington through two marriages founded the two lines that produced most, if not all, Lushingtons of any note. It was this second marriage that produced a survivor of the Black Hole of Calcutta and his brother Sir Stephen Lushington (1744-1807) of South Hill Park, Berkshire, a Member of Parliament and Chairman of the British East India Company.[4] It was this Sir Stephen who was the father of Stephen Lushington the father of Vernon and Godfrey.

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[1] In 1905 when Lushington was in Hawkshurt, Kent, probably staying with his friend and fellow Positivist Frederic Harrison at Elm Hill, he wrote to his youngest daughter Susan, "Here I am in Kent, as my fore fathers were men of Kent. From this place we were digged." SHC7854/11/7.
[2] H.J. McLachlan, *Thomas Lushington* New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (Oxford University Press).
[3] Ibid.
[4] Sir Stephen had been created a baronet in 1791 and, on his death, the title passed to his eldest son Henry. Sir Stephen's wife was Hester (d.1830), daughter of John Boldero of Aspenden Hall, Hertfordshire.

The Lushingtons of Ockham Park

Stephen Lushington (1782–1873) was the second of five children of Sir Stephen. He was educated at Eton and then at Christ Church, Oxford and was called to the bar in 1806. In the same year he entered Parliament as member for Great Yarmouth. He resigned his seat in 1808 but returned to Parliament as the member for Ilchester in 1820 and subsequently represented Tregony, Winchelsea and Tower Hamlets. Generally Stephen Lushington supported the Whig party except when policies on sugar duties conflicted with his anti-slavery sentiments. He was said to have been generous in his praise of opponents when he felt that they had embraced sound policies such as Peel on the matter of Catholic emancipation. Considered a reformer by his contemporaries, Lushington supported most of the liberal reforms of his era such as parliamentary reform, Catholic emancipation, full civil rights for Jews and dissenters, and reform of the criminal law. Although he favoured the secret ballot and triennial parliaments he would not go so far as supporting universal suffrage.[5] Stephen Lushington retired from Parliament in 1841 and went on to pursue a distinguished career in the law.

Stephen Lushington, with Lord Brougham, represented Queen Caroline in her divorce from George IV. He also represented Lady Byron in her separation from her notorious husband.[6] He went on to become a judge of the High Court of

[5] For more on Stephen Lushington see S.M. Waddams, *Law, Politics and the Church of England, The Career of Stephen Lushington 1782-1873* (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[6] Thomas Hardy, who dined with Vernon Lushington and his family at their London home in 1891, recorded how he had "looked at the portrait of Lushington's father, who had known Lady Byron's secret." Florence Emily Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., 1962) p. 234. This portrait, painted by Holman Hunt in 1862, was given to the National Portrait Gallery by Lushington's youngest daughter Susan in 1912. See also David C. Taylor, "Thomas Hardy and the Lushington Portrait", *The Thomas Hardy Review*, (1984), pp. 305-306.

Admiralty. He was also Dean of Arches from 1858 to 1867, when he retired from all his posts due to ill health. After Stephen Lushington's death F. D. Maurice wrote to Alice Lushington, "I always remembered your father with great affection & pleasure. I have never known anyone like him in his simplicity & kindness & generosity: He was the greatest link between the old & new generations who has lived in my time."[7] In 1821 Stephen had married Sarah Grace Carr, a close friend of Lady Byron. Sarah died after a harrowing illness in 1837, leaving ten children, five boys and five girls, to be brought up by her widowed husband and an unmarried sister, Frances Carr, at Ockham Park, near Ripley, Surrey which their father had leased from the family of Lady Byron.[8]

A glance through the biographies of many of the great names of the nineteenth century will usually reveal a reference to a Lushington. Franklin Lushington was Edward Lear's friend and executor; Edmund Lushington married Celia Tennyson, the poet's sister. Wherever social conscience, reform or philanthropy needed to be stirred into action in nineteenth-century England, a Lushington could usually be enlisted. Vernon Lushington's father, Stephen, through his friendship with William Wilberforce, became involved with the Clapham Sect.[9]

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[7] F.D. Maurice to Alice Lushington, 17 September 1890. SHC 7854/24/29. In 1859 Maurice was invited by Stephen Lushington to take over pastoral duties at Ockham church during the temporary absence of the minister. (F. Maurice ed., *The Life of Frederick Denison Maurice* (London, Macmillan & Co., 1884), p. 355. This was a remarkably generous act given Maurice's controversial theology and Lushington's role as a senior ecclesiastical judge. Maurice, who had earlier been Chaplain to Guy's Hospital of which Stephen Lushington was Governor, described the judge as "the freshest and heartiest as well as the kindest of old gentlemen". Vernon Lushington was later to be one of the pall bearers at Maurice's funeral.

[8] A letter from Stephen Lushington to T.F. Buxton, dated 31 July 1837, indicates that Sarah Lushington had a rapid form of cancer. Bodleian Library of Commonwealth & African Studies, Buxton Correspondence, MSS.Brit.Emp.s.44. Vol. 16 p. 57. On the 23 December 1837 Stephen Lushington wrote to Buxton that since his wife's death he could take no interest in anything but caring for the interests of his children. MSS Brit.Emp.s.44. Vol. 17 pp. 4-6.

[9] S.M. Waddams, *Stephen Lushington* New Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, (Oxford University Press)

A Child of the Clapham Sect?

A few days before their marriage, Vernon Lushington wrote to his fiancée, Jane Mowatt, "The time may come when I should find it my duty at whatever cost to speak out plainly to the world what I do think on religious matters; and to join publicly with others to give effect to our views. I wish to be quiet for this reason only, that I have nothing new to communicate, nothing of my own: nothing that wiser men than I do not well know: but a time may come for acting together and I would not be wanting then. Meanwhile, I am as I have told you; as I trust you feel, I am." [10] This raises the question of what were Lushington's views on "religious matters" and did he really have "nothing new to communicate." These questions will be considered in the light of the newly emerged archive and will form part of this study. Lushington's religious beliefs were central to his thought and actions. However before attempting to answer these questions it is necessary to consider the background against which he wrote this letter.

A common denominator often found in the study of those who experienced a crisis, or redirection of faith in the nineteenth century, is that their parents, and sometimes their grandparents, had belonged to an evangelical wing of the Anglican Church which became known as the Clapham Sect.[11] The members of this group accepted Christianity as the great fact of their existence, to which all else was subordinated, but not in an exclusive or unnatural manner. Like other

[10] Lushington to Jane Mowatt, 4 February 1865. SHC 7854/3/1.

[11] The group's name originates from Clapham, then a village south of London, where Wilberforce and Thornton, two of its most influential leaders lived and where many of the group's meetings were held. For discussion of descendants of the Clapham Sect and the crisis of faith see Christopher Tolley, *Domestic Biography: the legacy of evangelicalism in four nineteenth-century families* (Oxford: Clarendon 1997).

evangelicals, members of the Clapham Sect recognised the redemptive work of Christ upon the cross and the need for personal salvation, but they also believed their faith to be 'a Religion of Motives' in which God looked at the heart and judged men above all by the spirit in which they acted.

Although Stephen Lushington may not have been at the centre of the Clapham Sect being considered too latitudinarian by friends such as the evangelical abolitionist T.F. Buxton[12], he nevertheless developed strong and lasting friendships with many of the group's leading members such as Zachary Macaulay and William Wilberforce with whom he worked in the fight to abolish the slave trade.[13] So where did Stephen Lushington stand regarding religious matters? Although very sympathetic with both evangelicals and dissenters, he did not consider himself either. This he made clear in response to a letter of condolence upon his wife's death from a well known evangelical preacher. In writing to his sister-in-law he referred to the sentiments expressed by the preacher but added, "I cannot view all things in their light."[14] On the other hand, Stephen Lushington had no sympathy with the High Church party. He is perhaps best described as "a churchman of the old school".[15] Stephen Lushington might usefully be compared with Arthur Penryhn Stanley, Dean of Westminster, a close family friend. As the leading liberal theologian of his time in England Stanley regarded the age in which he lived as a period of transition and considered that

[12] T.F. Buxton to J. Jeremie, 20 March 1837, Buxton Papers 15, 40 cited in Waddams *The Career of Stephen Lushington 1782-1873*. The Buxton papers contain "a prayer that he [Buxton] might be able to console his friend Lushington on the loss of his wife. Buxton Papers Vol. 5 pp. 386-7.
[13] In 1828 Wilberforce wrote to Lushington and praised his "zeal in the Cause of the poor Negro Slaves." This was one of several letters written to Lushington regarding slavery which were auctioned at Sotheby's in 2000 and whose whereabouts is now unknown.
[14] Stephen Lushington to Frances Carr, 4 October 1837. SHC 7854/13/3.
[15] Waddams, *Law Politics and the Church of England*, p. 56.

the Christian church had yet to achieve what he called "its final or its most perfect aspect to the world".

Whatever Stephen Lushington's religious beliefs may have been, there is no doubt that he shared something of the ideology and pragmatism of the Clapham Sect and this was clearly manifested in the diverse matters on which he supported reform. Additionally he also strongly shared the group's strict ethical and moral values. William Gaunt wrote of Vernon Lushington being influenced by what he called "the rationalist ideas" of his father.[16] This was the background of the world into which Vernon Lushington was born, and even though his father chose to remain on the fringe of the Clapham Sect, Vernon's upbringing can justifiably be compared with others in the second generation of that group – the so-called "children of Clapham" - many of whom could be found within his circle of friendship.

What then marked out the Clapham Sect from other Christians? It roots were to be found in the work of the Wesley brothers and George Whitfield who, in the previous century, had brought a wake up call to both the slumbering Anglican community and then to the wider church. However, where some wings of the renewed church were considered bigoted and narrow minded, the Claphamites "exhibited the best side of Evangelicalism" and their leaders were considered men of strength and character. The underlying emphasis of their faith could be expressed in the saying that "actions speak louder than words". J.R. Seeley's sister, in writing of her strongly evangelical family background, stated that the

[16] William Gaunt *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (Cardinal edition, Sphere Books Ltd., 1975), p. 70.

"Religion, we were taught, was to be evidence by deeds rather than words; it was to be cherished in the heart, not chattered about by careless lips."[17] Within this expression of Christianity were the seeds which, for Lushington, were to be watered by the writings of Thomas Carlyle and to bear fruit outside Christianity in the altruism of Auguste Comte.

The Christianity of the Claphamites was a religion of motives; Christians were accountable beings who had no call to live simply at random.[18] For them parenthood was taken seriously because its responsibilities, becoming part of their own continuing education as Christians, seemed providentially ordained to bring them closer to God. However, this was taken to an extreme by the father of Sir Leslie Stephen who taught his sons to distrust any religious thinking that savoured of intellectual compromise. He was particular hostile to F.D. Maurice, a founder of the Christian Socialist Movement, for trying to dress up the Gospel in "some form of Philosophy".

A strong sense of duty was an important part of the Clapham creed. Clapham children, who "could not remember a time when their fathers idled," had to recognise that God expected them also to lead similar lives.[19] This sense of duty was also to be found within the positivism of Comte and the "Clapham" code continued to influence a hold on Lushington even after he was drawn to Carlyle and Comte. Lushington and his contemporaries feared that complete unbelief would ultimately lead to moral degeneration and a collapse of the established

[17] Quoted in "Sir John Seeley and his legacy". Doctoral thesis of David J. Worsley.
[18] Hannah Moore, *Practical Piety* (Charles Tilt, 1839), p. 192.
[19] George Otto Trevelyan, The life and letters of Lord Macaulay, Vol. 1 (Longmans, Green, and Co., 1876), p. 62.

system of values which underpinned nineteenth-century society. A.L. LeQuesne has written, "It was a generation that still sought answers to its problems in religious forms, but which at the same time found the traditional religious formulas unsatisfying".[20]

Lushington must also have felt it necessary to exercise some measure of restraint on the outward manifestation of his developing beliefs for fear of comprising his father's role as a judge in the ecclesiastical courts. In 1860 Stephen Lushington was called to pass judgement upon "Essays and Reviews", a collection of theological essays which created a storm in the Victorian church. Six of its seven authors were Anglican clergyman, and all were associated with a liberal view of theology which must have been shared by Stephen's son Vernon. Stephen was also involved in the judgement upon J.R. Seeley's controversial "Ecce Homo: a Survey of the Life of and Work of Jesus Christ" in 1865.[21] It is possible that Vernon chose not to align himself too publicly with the new thinking, especially that of Comte, until after his father's death in 1873, for although Stephen Lushington may have found his views congenial, it might have compromised his role in the ecclesiastical courts.[22]

[20] A.L. LeQuesne, p. 59.

[21] The historian Sir John Robert Seeley (1834-1895) entered Christ's College, Cambridge in 1852 and almost certainly knew Lushington at this time. In his doctoral thesis Worsley wrote, "In particular, Seeley had mixed with followers of the French philosopher August Comte, and came to regard their creed as a threat to Christianity."

[22] Another restraint upon Lushington making public his views on religion might have been the fact that one his father's sisters was married to Sir Culling Eardley Eardley who was President of the Evangelical Alliance from 1846 to 1863. However, even the evangelical Sir Culling worked to build relationships between non-conformists and Anglicans. He built a church on his estate at Erith, Kent and printed his own version of the Book of Common Prayer. His hope was that the church would be used for worship by Christians of all denominations.

Although many of the sons of Clapham families as second generation "adopted the same creed with equal sincerity and undiminished earnestness" they also had "a far keener sense of the hindrances opposed to the indiscriminate and rude exhibitions of it … A more elaborate education, greater familiarity with the world and with human affairs, a deeper insight into science and history, with a far nicer discernment of mere conventional proprieties, had opened to them a range of thought, and had brought them into relations with society, of which their fathers were comparatively destitute."[23] This was certainly true of Lushington whose years at Cambridge University gave him a broader perspective on religious and other affairs than his father could have experienced. Additionally, it was generally acknowledged that the cultural influences to be found in Clapham homes reflected a new, somewhat, milder kind of evangelicalism.

Boyhood, Schooling and the Navy

Vernon and his twin brother Godfrey were only five years old when their mother died. They remained firm friends throughout their lives and worked together on many common causes for social, legal and political reform. Their physical appearance was so alike that Vernon is said once to have addressed his own reflection in the mirror on the grand staircase at Convent Garden with the words, "Hullo Godfrey, I didn't know I was to have the pleasure of seeing you here this evening."[24] William Rossetti later recalled "the two brothers were so alike that I have more than once made a mistake between them. However it happened that Vernon Lushington, who had been in the navy in early youth, had by accident

[23] *Essays in Ecclesiastical Biography*, vol. 2, p. 311.
[24] Letter to David Taylor from Mr John Montgomery Massingberd. 16 July, 1981.

lost a finger: a surreptitious glance at his hand was a useful precaution against such blundering." [25]

Vernon and Godfrey spent a year at Cheam School and, in a letter to his daughter Susan in May 1900, Vernon reminisced, "I quite agree with you as to the pretty old look of Epsom. I enjoy it every time I go there. But you, dear Sue, cannot have my primeval recollection of it – date about 1842 or 43 when my Father came there with Fanny & Alice [Vernon's sisters] & the horses, putting up at 'Baker's Coffeehouse' as it was called, & Godfrey & I came over from Cheam, dined with them, & walked back the next morning. It was September, for I remember the blackberries."[26] The Lushington twins probably received some form of home education from their two aunts who had taken over the school at Ockham which had been planed by Ada, Lady King, the daughter of Lord Byron in 1836. Besides teaching the usual elementary subjects, the curriculum also offered carpentry and gardening and the school had a gymnasium.[27]

One further glimpse of Vernon and Godfrey's boyhood years is found in a letter written by an unnamed brother (probably Godfrey) to his sister Alice in 1846. The letter, written from Ockham Park, tells how the unidentified writer, together with Vernon and another brother William, spent their holidays horse riding and in other activities on the estate. "Yesterday Vernon & I went out for a walk &

[25] This story was repeated several times by various friends including Augustus Hare who, in his autobiography "Peculiar People: The Story of My Life", wrote the brothers were so alike that "it would have been impossible to know them apart, if Vernon had not, fortunately for their friends, shot off some of his fingers." Sir Edward Clarke in an address on F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley at the Working Men's College in 1913 also noted of Vernon and Godfrey that they were "so much alike that it you met one of them you had to shake hands before you knew whether he was the brother who had lost his finger." Jane Welsh Carlyle also noted Lushington's loss of fingers.

[26] Lushington to Susan Lushington May 1890. SHC7854/11/3.

[27] H.E. Malden ed. *Victoria County History of Surrey*, Vol. 3, (Constable 1913) p. 360.

bathed, but stopping too long to devour blackberries, were pressed for time. Accordingly we made a dashing short cut over Mr Lambert's carrot and potato field, broke through 3 nasty hedges, scaled the park wall, & ran home, just in time to wash our hands & go downstairs." The letter continues "Although the naval business is no longer a secret, for it is entirely settled, yet the little ones and the servants know nothing about it, in order that Papa may not hear it talked about. However I imagine the subject does not vex him as it formerly did."[28] Presumably "this naval business" must relate to the next phase of Vernon's life when he joined the training ship HMS Eurydice at Portsmouth on 18 October 1846 as a naval cadet. That being so, it suggests that Vernon had stepped out of line and chosen a career move of which his father did not approve. This is in marked contrast to his otherwise general respect for his father's wishes and indicates a sense of independency in Vernon at an early age.

Holman Hunt has left a record of life at Ockham in 1862 which also sheds further light on Vernon and his relationship with his father. Vernon had invited Hunt to paint his father's portrait. In a letter from Ockham to his patron Thomas Combe, Hunt wrote that Vernon had kept the portrait a surprise as Stephen Lushington was reluctant to have his portrait taken. Hunt wrote:

> He is really a dear old fellow – as clear and quick in wit as the youngest man in the company and with the gravest possible judgement in all his remarks and manners. His sweetness of temper to everyone in the house is perfectly remarkable so that it would be a thousand wonders were he

[28] 17 August 1846. SHC 7854.

> not loved as he is –almost to idolatry…Vernon it seems is an especial favourite. When he heard the news he declared that Vernon was the most impudent dog in the world – but as the matter was already arranged he acquiesced in it and promised to give me the best chance he could."[29]

In later recalling this event, Hunt said how, on sitting down to his first dinner at the house, he was promptly challenged to his views on the American Civil War. Hunt said that he supported the North. Whereupon Lushington exclaimed "Well done! We are all Northerners here."[30] In a letter to Thomas Combe, Hunt grumbled in good humour, "The good old Doctor has not the virtue of being a steady or patient sitter - in fact he does not sit at all, and I could not wish him to do so for once or twice when I have for a minute kept him in one position his whole expression has become so different that I have not been able to go on, the only chance there is the most perfect perseverance."[31] During his sittings Stephen Lushington recounted many stories from his past including how he had been at the theatre in London when, in the middle of the performance, an announcement had been made that the "French people have murdered their King." Another letter concerning this episode was sent from Hunt to Frederick Stephens. Hunt jokingly says of the painting "of course as I only began it a month ago I am likely to stay here another eleven months". During this visit Hunt was unable to escape the Lushington family's philanthropic passion. He wrote a few days later

[29] W. Holman Hunt to Thomas Combe, 28 September 1862. The John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Eng.MS.1213/4.
[30] W. Holman Hunt, *Pre-Raphaelitism and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood*, (Macmillan & Co., 1905), p. 219. Support for the North was an area where the radicals broke with their own social order.
[31] Gaunt, p. 88.

to Stephen that he had made arrangements to send a poor girl to Australia.[32] Stephen Lushington also cared for those nearer home. During the hard winter of 1856, and being concerned for the villagers of Ockham, he wrote to his daughter Alice, "Should the weather continue severe remember you have command of my purse & God has blessed me with great prosperity & I ought not to be niggardly." Some years later he wrote to his daughter Fanny, "If this frost should last I fear for our poor people. What think you of asking Mr Onslow in our absence in urgent cases to give relief at my expense?"[33] Early in his career Stephen Lushington had spoken to a committee of the House of Lords in favour of the protection of chimney-sweepers' boys and, later, he supported restrictions on the hours of work for children in factories.[34] His care for individual needs whether local or further afield ran alongside his involvement in the anti-slavery movement and his friend and co-worker in that area of concern, Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton, described him as an "honest, and generous a supporter of our great cause as could be; and in private life a most kind and faithful friend, with no other fault than too much zeal and too much liberality."[35]

Lushington inherited his father's character and sense of fair play. An early indication of this was recorded by William Gaunt, who knew Lushington's

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[32] W. Holman Hunt to F. G. Stephens, 1862. Bodleian Library. M.S.Don.e.66fols.70-1. William Rossetti, who spent Christmas 1859, at Ockham Park, had similar recollections of Stephen Lushington "then very advanced in years, but still lively or even brisk in manner, and with a seeming youthfulness of heart which filled him with amiable *bonhomie*: I recollect the almost juvenile gusto with which he listened standing to the singing of "Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doune." *Some Reminiscences of William Michael Rossetti*, (London, Brown Langham & Co. Ltd., 1906), Vol. 1 p. 269.

[33] Stephen Lushington to Alice Lushington, 3 December 1856, SHC 7854/13/2 and Stephen Lushington to Fanny Lushington, 13 January 1867, SHC 7854/13/3.

[34] *Speech of Dr Lushington in support of the Bill for the better regulation of chimney sweepers and their apprentices and for preventing the employment of boys in climbing chimneys* (London, 1818); Hansard, 2nd ser., xiii, 648 (17 May 1825) and Hansard, 3rd ser., xvii, 103 (3 April 1833).

[35] C. Buxton (ed.), *Memoirs of Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton*, (John Murray, 1849), p. 132.

daughter Susan in her latter years and who stayed with her whilst writing his pioneering work on the Pre Raphaelites. Gaunt recorded the following incident.

> Beginning life as a midshipman he was incensed at the bullying then practised; and finding one of the officers engaged in roasting a midshipman (over a fire, as in *Tom Brown's* Schooldays), knocked him down. This piece of insubordination deserved and received praise, but also a nominal reprimand; the upshot was that he left the navy and went to Cambridge to study law.[36]

Lushington had entered the service on 18 October 1846. The original papers relating to his discharge have not survived. However a digest of the matter reveals that the charges were considered, "frivolous, a subversion of the discipline on of the Service." Lushington was punished by a loss of three months sea time, his offence being described as "misconduct". He was discharged from service on 13 December 1849.[37] Lushington retained his affinity with nautical life long after he left the navy and a friend recalled how, when out on the popular Working Men's College Sunday walks, he would always greet any passing sailor with a nautical phrase.[38] In 1870, during the Franco-Prussian War, he wrote to his wife of the events "all so near too. Those who remember the year 1848 may have something of the same feeling, but I was a boy, in the Indian Seas."[39]

[36] Gaunt, p. 70.
[37] TNA ADM/508, Cut 34.23 and TNA ADM 196/36.
[38] Lushington Obituary in The Working Men's College Journal, Vol. XII, No. 223, March 1912.
[39] SHC7854/3/7/27. Lushington's naval record records that in November 1847 he was engaged in an attack on the Arab defences in Mozambique.

In 1850 Lushington followed his brother Edward to the East India Company College at Haileybury.[40] His application for the college was supported by the Reverend W.J. Conybeare who had been privately tutoring him at his Axminster vicarage. Conybeare, a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, was a noted "broad churchman" with views similar to Lushington's father.[41] Although Conybeare's churchmanship would have helped provide a liberal outlook for Lushington as he prepared for Cambridge, he would not have condoned his pupil's later adoption of Positivism. In 1853 Conybeare contributed an article to *The Edinburgh Review* on "Church Parties" at the end of which he comments, "The highest ranks and most intelligent professionals are influenced by sceptical opinions, to an extent which, twenty years back, would have been deemed incredible."[42] In 1856 Conybeare wrote a novel called "Perversion; or, The Causes and Consequences of Infidelity" in which he perceived Positivism as coming between Unitarianism and Mormonism on a downward-sliding path of sin and unbelief.

When Lushington entered the East India College its principal was the Reverend Henry Melvill (1798-1871), a popular evangelical preacher whose sermons, unusually lacked simplicity and directness and appealed more to the literary than the spiritual sense.[43] Lushington's tutor in Asian languages was Monier Monier-

[40] Edward Harbord Lushington (1822-1896) spent thirty years in India in the Civil Service. He was appointed Secretary to the Government of Bengal and afterwards he became Financial Secretary to the India Government. On his return to England in 1870 he settled in a house in Cobham not far from Pyports which was to become Vernon Lushington's country home some years later. In 1876 he was elected to succeed his father as Governor Guy's Hospital. His obituary is in *Guy's Hospital Gazette,* 5 December 1896, p. 548.
[41] Noel Annan places the Conybeares within his "intellectual aristocracy" see Noel Annan "The Intellectual Aristocracy", J.H. Plumb ed. *Studies in Social History* (London 1955) pp. 243- 286.
[42] The Edinburgh Review, October 1853, p. 342.
[43] One of Lushington's fellow pupils at Haileybury was William (later Sir William) Herschel, a son of the noted astronomer. The two remained life long friends.

Williams who believed that the conversion of India to the Christian religion was one of the aims of oriental scholarship. John Beames later recalled his years at the school: "Haileybury was a happy place, though rather a farce as far as learning was concerned. In fact you might learn as much or as little as you liked, but while the facilities for not learning were considerable, those for learning were, in practice, somewhat scanty."[44] Despite this Lushington gave himself to learning and, on his leaving, the headmaster wrote to his father "I cannot but express my regret at the loss wh. our Coll. will sustain on the retirement from its walls of one of its highest ornaments, of one so admirably qualified in every respect to be the Head of the College."[45] Lushington won prizes in Classics, Law, History and Political Economics, Sanskrit and Hindi as well as a General Proficiency Prize.[46] It was at Haileybury that Lushington first appeared in print with a humorous essay that was published in the school magazine.[47]

After the loss of their mother Lushington and his siblings were brought up a maiden aunt at Ockham. Unlike some nineteenth-century sons, Vernon retained a good relationship with his father who, with his liberal and latitudinarian views on religious matters allowed his son a good measure of freedom in his early development that was not always found in Victorian families. His father's sympathies gave Vernon tacit permission to think unconventionally and in these early years of his development, the seeds were sown for his later abandonment of orthodox faith and his commitment to Comte's Positivism.

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[44] *John Beames, Memoirs of a Bengal Civilian,* ed. C.H. Cooke. (Chatto & Windus, 1961), p. 63.
[45] 13 January 1852. SHC 7854/13.
[46] Charles Danvers & Others, *Memorials of Old Haileybury College* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1894), p. 451.
[47] "Stylo-philus Having Broken His Golden Pen, Indulgeth in the Following Strain". *The Haileybury Observer* (1852) p. xii

- 3 -

Seminal Years: Cambridge & Beyond

"Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labour, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land."[1]

The 1850s witnessed a watershed in the development of scientific understanding and theological ideology in this country. This decade saw the publication of Harriet Martineau's translation into English of Comte's *Cours de Philosophie Positive* (1853), Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* (1859), and *Essays and Reviews*, a collection of controversial papers by seven liberal Anglican clergymen (1860). These were seminal years in Lushington's intellectual and spiritual development and his journey to Positivism as he built upon the foundations of justice, fair play, and an open and enquiring mind which had been laid during his formative years chiefly under his father's influence. They were the years he later called "the tropic season of life … that season of highest hopes, highest pleasures, deepest griefs, above all the season of arduous experiments upon oneself & the world."[2]

Lushington spent the first few years of this decade at Cambridge University and it was there that two decisively important events in his intellectual and spiritual

[1] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *In Memoriam*, 1850. Stanza LXXXVII verse 6.
[2] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 17 February, 1862.

development took place. The first was his introduction, by his brother Godfrey, to the visionary philosophy of Auguste Comte. As a result Lushington became one of the chief exponents of Positivism in Cambridge leading the Bostonian William Everett to write to Henry Jackson in 1873 that it pervaded the place.[3] Cashdollar convincingly argues how, in the 1860's and 70's there emerged in Cambridge a new generation of theologians whose work was influenced in some way by Comte.[4] Lushington therefore requires recognition not only for his role in the introduction of Positivism to Cambridge but also as one of those who helped prepare the way for the resulting theological revisionism.

Oxford may have been more attuned to the philosophy of religion but Cambridge was more attuned to biblical studies. Trinity College in particular, was the centre of classical scholarship and enjoyed a freedom from the religious controversies such as those inflamed by the Tractarian movement which Oxford experienced. At Cambridge, Cashdollar writes, "the incarnation was more a basis for living, less a considered solution to a philosophical problem. It was Jesus, revealer of the principles of the ideal society, not Christ, window to God and the divine ideal … Among Cambridge liberals, the tendency was to seek agreement with Comte on service to humanity rather than to settle disagreements about the nature of knowledge."[5]

The other significant event that took place during Lushington's time at Cambridge was an epiphany moment he later described in the *Oxford and*

[3] William Everett to Henry Jackson, 25 March 1873, Trinity College, MS. c. 29.
[4] Charles D. Cashdollar, *The Transformation of Theology 1830-1890. Positivism and Protestant Thought in Britain and America* (Princeton University Press, 1989).
[5] Ibid p. 426.

Cambridge Magazine, when he discovered for himself, the powerful prophetic rhetoric of Thomas Carlyle who preached a gospel of work, wherein, he believed, lay the salvation of mankind. Brooke Foss Westcott, later Bishop of Durham, ascribed to the Cambridge of his generation the motto of Benjamin Whichcote: "I act, therefore I am."[6] Although written of Cambridge in the late 1840's, this would equally apply to the university in the following decade. It might well also be considered a fitting motto for Lushington who believed that his salvation would ultimately be found in the altruistic activities prescribed by Comte. The impact of Carlyle and Comte in the shaping of Lushington's mind is central to this thesis and so to each will be devoted one of the following chapters. This chapter will deal with the context of these two influences by considering the wider aspect of Lushington's academic and social life at Cambridge and beyond - particularly with regard to his development as a Positivist.

In addition to his discovery of Carlyle and Comte at Cambridge, Lushington's time at the university was punctuated by a number of other important events all of which had a bearing on his intellectual development. In 1854 Lushington first met William Morris when he came to Cambridge with Edward Burne-Jones. Shortly afterwards Lushington met D.G. Rossetti, probably through the Working Men's College in London where he had volunteered his services as tutor working alongside Charles Kingsley and John Ruskin. In 1855 Lushington introduced Burne-Jones to Rossetti, an event that was to lead to the second flowering of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. Lushington went on to befriend others in the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood including William Holman Hunt and the sculptor

[6] A. Westcott, *The Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott* (London, 1903) II, p.328. Westcott was elected a Fellow of Trinity College in 1849 and left Cambridge in 1852.

Alexander Munro.[7] It was at the Cambridge bookshop of the Macmillan brothers in Trinity Lane that Lushington first encountered Christian Socialism and met F.D. Maurice which led him to the Working Men's College where he was able to practise his joint ideals of Socialism and Positivism.[8] It was also during his time at Cambridge that Lushington became a published author when, in 1855, he first publicly expressed his social conscience in a booklet defending the Crimean War.[9] Finally it was at the end of this decade that Lushington and his brother, as newly qualified lawyers, joined forces with Frederic Harrison and others to help consolidate the Trade Union Movement.

Trinity … "the most liberal College"

The choice of Cambridge University was eminently suitable for Lushington especially because, a few years earlier, it had been the choice of his distant cousins, the brothers Henry and Franklin Lushington. Families of the "Intellectual Aristocracy" are said to have preferred Cambridge to Oxford "possibly because the Tractarian Movement frightened evangelical families".[10] Cambridge was also preferred because "ever since the Civil War, [it] had the more pleasant associations for non-conformist families."[11] There had been a brief flaring of religious enthusiasm at Cambridge under Charles Simeon but, after his death in 1836, "Cambridge faithfully reflected the steady decline of upper-class

[7] Lushington's involvement with the Pre-Raphaelite artists will be discussed in a later chapter.
[8] Lushington also worked with Fenton Hort, F.D. Maurice and others in an attempt to set up a Working Men's College in Cambridge. It did not last long however, more because of the lack of students than tutors.
[9] Vernon Lushington, *How Shall The Strong Man Use His Strength?* (London. Bell & Daldy, 1855).
[10] Paul Levy, *G.E. Moore and the Cambridge Apostles* (Oxford University Press paperback, 1981), p.27.
[11] Ibid.

Evangelical fervour."[12] Lushington may not have come from a non-conformist family but, as explained in the previous chapter, they had, through the Clapham Sect, forged close links with some of those within the evangelical wing of the Anglican Church and even families like the Lushingtons, although not avowedly evangelical, were infected with the spirit. However, by Lushington's generation, an earlier expression of fervent evangelicalism had become more "an attitude of the soul rather than a dogmatic creed".[13] An additional bonus of being at Cambridge at this time was that whereas Oxford graduates at matriculation were required to subscribe to the Thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, Cambridge students, before taking a degree, had only to swear that they were bona fide members of the Church of England. [14]

Lushington was admitted as a pensioner at Trinity College on 17 January 1852 at the age of nineteen. He matriculated in the Lent term and became a scholar two years later.[15] In 1854 Charles Kingsley wrote to John Martineau urging him to persuade his father to "send you by all means to Trinity. It is far the most liberal College, and from its great size you will have the power of choosing your set, and you will find there plenty of chaste and sober men, at once free-thinking and God-fearing. There is a noble group of men there now, and you will like them and profit by them."[16] In 1856, Godfrey Lushington, despite his allegiance to Oxford, wrote, "Nothing struck me more in visiting Trinity Cambridge, than to observe how independent there men are of those who do not suit them: how

[12] Harvie, p. 28.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Martha McMacklin Garland, *Cambridge Before Darwin. The Idea of a Liberal Education 1800-1860* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 71.
[15] Lushington's tutor at Cambridge was John Cooper, Vicar of Kendal from 1858 to 1896.
[16] Kingsley to Martineau, 19 September 1854. Violet Martineau, *John Martineau, The Pupil of Kingsley.* (London: Edward Arnold, 1921), p. 20.

much more freely richer and poorer mixed together; and how much more decided was the literary element of the place, because it embodied into a set, instead of, as at Oxford, being scattered amongst the various little worlds of the colleges."[17] G.M. Young neatly encapsulated university life at this time when he wrote of how, from the 1840s, "a new type" was issuing from the Universities and public schools. They were:

> Somewhat arrogant and somewhat shy, very conscious of their standing as gentlemen but very conscious of their duties too, men in tweeds who smoke on the streets, disciples of Maurice, willing hearers of Carlyle, passionate for drains and co-operative societies.[18]

With his passion for Carlyle, his friendship with Maurice, and his initial support for the Christian Socialists, Lushington certainly fitted at least the last part of this description.

Garland writes of the Cambridge men that "They were all devoted in a new way to academic work of high quality … They were prepared to examine new materials – German theology, geological sub-strata – and to look at old materials in new ways."[19] In particular, it was Trinity men who were in the forefront of the reform movement in Cambridge in the 1860s. Trinity's Master during Lushington's time there was William Whewell, a central figure in the development of early nineteenth-century Cambridge who, despite an openness to

[17] Godfrey Lushington, "Oxford", *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, (London: Bell and Daldy, 1856), p. 251.
[18] G.M. Young, *Portrait of an Age: Victorian England*, 2nd edn. (Phoenix Press, 2002) p. 74.
[19] Garland, pp. 26-27.

reform and a willingness to consider new interpretations of Christian theology, remained opposed to Comte and his writings considering them to be a threat to the faith.[20] Whewell considered Comte "a shallow pretender" whose "pretensions to discoveries were … absurdly fallacious."[21] Cashdollar believes that Whewell's "negative orientation" was important in shaping early attitudes toward Comte in Cambridge."[22] If that is true, it is all the more remarkable that the seeds of Positivism, sown in Lushington at this time, took root and flourished as they did. By embracing Comte and his ideas, contrary to any influence the Master of Trinity sought to exercise, Lushington demonstrated the strong independent spirit which his twin brother had observed as a mark of Trinity scholars.[23] Cashdollar also notes that Cambridge theology "had a more obviously ethical quality and was less liable to moods of scepticism."[24] This quality is likely to have been another contributory cause to the appeal of Positivism and its altruistic ideal at Cambridge. Comte himself expected that Cambridge with its strong mathematical bias would be the most likely source of any disciples who might emerge.[25] Furthermore the most important English influence on Cambridge was Samuel Taylor Coleridge whose idea of a National Clerisy was not that far removed Comte's idea of a Positivist Society.

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[20] Trinity was dominated by Whewell's presence. He was far from popular in the University and in the College there was a tendency to criticise him. (*The Harrow Life of Henry Montague Butler* pp. 47). Lushington explicitly crossed swords with Whewell in 1859 by attempting to have Thomas Woolner's bust of Tennyson placed in the Library at Trinity. Whewell refused it on the ground that no portraits of living celebrities could be placed in the Library. He did, however, permit the bust to be placed in the vestibule where it remained until Whewell's death when it was finally placed in the Library. Lushington wrote to Monkton Milnes concerning this matter on 28 February 1859 (Trinity College Library, Houghton CB247/1). A full account of the episode and Lushington's role in it can be found *The Life of Butler* p. 183.

[21] William Whewell, "Comte and Positivism", *Macmillan's Magazine*, March, 1866. pp 353-362.

[22] Cashdollar, p. 50.

[23] Another formidable opponent of Positivism at Cambridge was Charles Kingsley who became Regius Professor of Modern History at the university in the 1860s. Kingsley complained to Maurice in 1868, "The very air seems full of Comtism." *Charles Kingsley. His Letters and Memories of His Life*, (Henry S. King & Co., London, 1877), Vol. 2, p. 274.

[24] Cashdollar, p. 426.

[25] Kent, p. 60.

"the youthful wanderers and seekers of the earth"[26]

Lushington soon made an impression among his fellow students at Cambridge. Henry Montague Butler wrote to his sister:

> Vernon Lushington, the facsimile of his Rugby brother, has just come up, to stay his three years. I have seen a good deal of him already, and look forward to knowing him. He seems of an uncommonly bold independent disposition, thoroughly in earnest with whatever he takes up, and with nothing of narrowness or bigotry in his composition as far as I can judge from one or two discussions I have had with him. He is supposed to be a very good speaker.[27]

Butler was impressed by Lushington's "bold and independent disposition". This boldness had earlier been demonstrated earlier by his decision to enter the navy, seemingly against his father's wishes. However such boldness was not always immediately appreciated by those he met. Elizabeth Gaskell wrote to her daughter Marianne, "Mr Vernon Lushington brought his sister Alice to tea last night, promiscuous, i.e. uninvited."[28] However Mrs Gaskell eventually became fond of Lushington, calling him "Cousin V". She wrote to Henry Bright, "Yes I do like Mr Lushington very much; and it is a consequence of prejudice on my

[26] Lushington to J.C. Maxwell, 31 May 1858, on the eve of Maxwell's marriage to Katherine Mary Dewer: "Next Wednesday is your second of June, after which we shall no longer be able to think of you as one of ourselves – the youthful wanderers and seekers of the earth." Quoted in Lewis Campbell & William Garnett *The Life of James Clerk Maxwell* (Macmillan & Co., 1882) p.312.
[27] Henry Montague Butler to Emily Butler, 1 February 1852. Trinity College, JRMB, M3/1/188.
[28] *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, ed. J.A.V. Chapple and Arthur Pollard (Manchester University Press, 1966). Elizabeth Gaskell to Marianne Gaskell, June 1853.

part; for when I first knew him he rubbed my fur (mentally speaking,) all the wrong way, but I do think it best to begin with a little aversion."[29]

One of the earliest surviving letters from Lushington in the archive, written to his sister Alice in 1854, provides a glimpse into his life at Trinity College:

> I am now once settled over my books, & working away valiantly. I saw Babington last night, & breakfasted with him & Montague Butler this morning, - From them I learnt that I had passed the Little go safely – no great feat certainly, but still a satisfactory assurance - & that as far as they knew, all my friends likewise amongst them though with considerable danger.[30]

Babington was Charles Edward Babington a grandson of the Thomas Babington who had worked with Vernon's father and William Wilberforce for the abolition of the slave trade.[31] In 1853 Lushington had written to Alice from Ireland informing her that he was to stay with Babington's family in Lichfield on his way home.[32] Lushington's friendship with Babington not only confirms the ties between his family and the evangelical families of the Clapham Sect but also illustrates how such links could extend into the third generation even though they

[29] Ibid. Elizabeth Gaskell to Henry Bright, 12 April 1862.
[30] SHC 7854. Not yet catalogued. The "Little go" was a test of classical and theological knowledge.
[31] Information from Trinity College, Cambridge. Babington came up to Trinity at the rather mature age of 22 in May 1850 and graduated BA in 1854. He was ordained in 1854 and took the Curacy of Needwood near Lichfield.
[32] SHC 7854. Not yet catalogued.

may not still share the same enthusiastic faith.[33] Babington died prematurely in 1855 and Lushington and Montague Butler attended his funeral. Butler later wrote to his sister:

> To poor Vernon it is almost the saddest loss that could have happened. He and Babington, thoroughly different, the one living in the active and fiery future, the other a truly noble specimen of the old chivalrous Tory (not Conservative), were everything to one another. Babington's influence brought out in him his love for Wordsworth and Ruskin, and for outward nature, and indeed many of the gentler parts of his character. It was beautiful to see them together.[34]

Also in 1853 Lushington wrote from Cambridge to Joanna Richardson, daughter of an old friend of his father. Lushington wrote:

> Autumn is melancholy, after all is it not? But for myself I have a vast deal to do, I have no time to be melancholy; work, I mean that must be done; I scarcely ever think it is autumn, for I always take my exercise in the tennis court, where there is no 'outwards view of earth & sky for me' – unless sometimes I take a stroll in the 'the backs', & cast my eye up at our glorious line of chestnuts, now in their most brilliant yellow - & wish that some one was here to draw them.[35]

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[33] Fenton J.A. Hort, who went to Cambridge in 1851, was another of Babington's friends having made a short excursion to South Wales with him that year. A.F. Hort, *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort* (2 vols.) (Macmillan & Co. Ltd., (1896), p. 173.
[34] Graham, E., *The Harrow Life of Henry Montague Butler* (Longmans & Co., 1920), p. 67.
[35] The letters of Vernon Lushington to Joanna Richardson and her sisters are held by the National Library of Scotland. Lushington was on close terms with Richardson's three daughters, Joanna,

This letters reveals two contrasting sides to Lushington's character. On the one hand there is the sportsman exercising on the tennis courts, and the other the more sensitive side wanting someone (perhaps the young lady to whom the letter was addressed) to be there with him to capture on paper the autumnal beauty of the Cambridge "backs". This dual aspect of his character continued to be expressed in his later correspondence where he graphically describes long, physically exhausting, rides on a favourite horse with a deeply sensitive appreciation of the beauty of countryside through which he passed. Lushington's appreciation of nature and art developed into a strong passion for the arts which he led him to the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and their associates that was later to find a deeper spirituality and philosophical application in the Religion of Humanity of Auguste Comte.

The following year Lushington wrote again to Joanna telling her that he had been to hear the noted, and sometimes controversial, Bishop Selwyn of New Zealand preach in St. Mary's church. Lushington did not altogether approve of the Bishop's sermon explaining to Joanna:

Helen & Lizzie and occasionally visited them at their home – Kirklands, at Ancrum, Roxburghshire. The sisters were later to meet Lushington in London and were entertained by Judge Stephen Lushington's home at Ockham Park, near Ripley, Surrey. Richardson was an old friend of both Sir Walter Scott and Thomas Carlyle who, according to a letter from Lushington to Joanna Richardson of March 1860, "spoke kindly of your father, 'innocent hearted' he called him and said 'if he' were not so chained up to his Prussian matters' he would pay you all a visit at Kirklands, & hoped some day really to do so." In April 1861 Lushington wrote to Joanna that he had "just returned from taking tea with Mr & Mrs Carlyle. He spoke to me most kindly, as usual of your father. He seemed very well, & when I cam in was busy correcting proof sheets of Frederick Vol. III, Mrs Carlyle too had passed thro' the winter much better that usual." He concluded the letter by urging Joanna to read George Eliot's 'Silas Marner'. "Yet it is a good book for <u>any</u> time, full of truth & beauty. We brothers & sisters have all enjoyed it exceedingly. Indeed every one must enjoy it." NLS MS.3990 ff. 319-323; ff. 357-361.

> He has a powerful & impressive style, though owing more I think to that commanding presence & decisive manner … his sermon was not quite after my heart : it wanted simplicity & gentleness, & did very scant justice to his beautiful text – one that I remember Lizzie having quoted when I was at Kirklands, as expressing a truth, as often that book (so she called it) does better than it is to be found elsewhere – "He that doth the will of my Father in heaven, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be true" . So on the whole I was not satisfied with what I heard – yet still it is something to see so lordly a man & to know that his life has been no child's play, or religious chatter, but downright earnest energetic work.[36]

When John Martineau went up to Cambridge in 1854 he wrote to his parents "Lushington, Monro, Heeley, and other men of that set have called upon me, so that I have suddenly got into just the very best set in Trinity, an advantage which happens to few freshmen, especially if not Trinity men."[37] "Heeley" was Wilfred Heeley who later remembered Lushington as:

> One of the jolliest men I know in Trinity … The young Lushington had been a middy for three years, cruising about in the Indian Ocean, having rencontres with Arabs &c, then comes up to Cambridge and takes up arms against a sea of troubles, classical and mathematical. He is thoroughly frank, open and sailor like, earnest and enthusiastic, extremely Radical, but not wildly, taking a great interest in all questions of political

[36] Lushington to Joanna Richardson, undated but must be 1854. NLS MS. 3990, ff.177-80.
[37] Martineau, p. 22.

economy and moral philosophy, an ardent admirer of Plato, Wordsworth, and especially Ruskin".[38]

It was Heeley, a Birmingham school friend of Edward Burne-Jones, who later introduced Lushington to William Morris.[39] Burne-Jones and Morris had met when they entered. Within a few days of meeting they became inseparable friends. Burne-Jones introduced Morris into "the Set", a group of like-minded, serious young men with a particular interest in the aesthetic side of religion, which was based at Pembroke College. In addition to Burne-Jones and Morris, the group consisted of William Fulford, Richard Watson Dixon, Charles Faulkner and Cormell Price. In 1854 Heeley invited Morris and Burne-Jones to spend a week in Cambridge. If Burne-Jones's later record of his first introduction to Rossetti through Lushington is correct, then he did not meet Lushington upon this occasion. Whatever happened during the visit by the Oxford students, the result was that both Lushington and Heeley were added to the Set which was subsequently renamed the Brotherhood. The original primitive or monastic ideals of the Set began to fade away as they developed a wider knowledge and more enquiring intelligence. John Ruskin's *Pre-Raphaelitism*, published in 1851, led Morris and Burne-Jones to develop an obsessive interest in the work of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and, in particular, Rossetti.

The youthful idealism of the new Brotherhood required an outlet. They were keen "to find some united and organised method of bringing their beliefs and

[38] Wilfred Heeley (1855) quoted in Lady Georgina Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* (Macmillan 1912), p. 125.
[39] This is confirmed in J.W. Mackail's *The Life of William Morris* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1899), Vol. 1, p. 36. Mackail described Heeley as "a man of brilliant parts and amiable nature, whose career in India was cut short by an early death."

enthusiasm before the world, to join actively in the crusade of which Carlyle, Ruskin, and Tennyson were the accepted leaders."[40] The result was the appearance in January 1856 of the first edition of *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, an ambitious but short-lived publication, largely financed by Morris who used it as a vehicle to publish some of his first written work. It aims were to propagate the ideas of the group, both social and aesthetic - in that order. Lushington made two important contributions to this publication. These were a lengthy, serialised, essay on Carlyle, and a critique of two paintings by Rossetti and Ford Madox Brown.[41] Lushington's contributions to the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* will be considered more fully in a later chapter. Godfrey Lushington also contributed an important article with the title "Oxford" which dealt with the issue of university reform which was then beginning a matter of public debate. Burne-Jones later wrote of the magazine:

> MacDonald is at present only a complement. When we have filled out staff to completion he will retire, and two giants come in his place, Faulkner, on whose youthful brown hand the heaviest laurels Oxford has given for years, and a great Cambridge man named Lushington, to whom I have not yet been introduced. He is already an author and I hear a very fine fellow.[42]

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[40] Mackail, Vol. I, p. 67.

[41] The work by Brown which Lushington chose to critique was his iconic painting *The Last of England*. Lushington first saw this painting in 1856 and wrote a lengthy letter of praise to Brown recommending him to exhibit. Lushington wrote of the painting, "Indeed it is a subject characteristic of our time." He then added perceptively, "I wish all you Pre-Raphaelites would give up to the work of recording things memorable amongst us now. God knows, today is interesting enough." V&A MSL/1995/14/59/1-4). Lushington's essay on this painting in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine will be discussed in a later chapter.

[42] *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* p. 123.

"We have chosen our path / Path to a clear-purposed goal"[43]

Burne-Jones considered Lushington "a great Cambridge man" and both Wilfred Heeley and Montague Butler applied the word "earnest" to describe their new friend. "Earnest" was a very fashionable word in the middle years of the nineteenth century and one which carried considerable meaning. If there was one outstanding attribute that characterised the young intellectuals of the mid nineteenth century it was that of earnestness. A new breed of young men such as Lushington emerged at this time who, with an enthusiastic singleness of mind and a whole hearted commitment, sought for truth in the malaise of the religious and moral thinking of their day. T.W. Heyck has written that "the importance of being earnest, as preached by Thomas Arnold and shared by men like the Cambridge Apostles and Benjamin Jowett, created a much more busy and hard-working atmosphere" at the universities.[44]

But what did it actually mean to be earnest and why, to quote Oscar Wilde, was it so important? [45] Walter Houghton wrote that "To be earnest intellectually was to have or seek to have genuine beliefs about the most fundamental questions in life, and on no account merely to repeat customary and conventional notions insincerely, or to play with ideas or with words as if the intellectual life were a

[43] Matthew Arnold, *Rugby Chapel*, lines 84-5.
[44] T.W. Heyck, *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England* (Croom Helm 1982) p. 170.
[45] It was clearly considered by some as more a manly aspiration for, in George Eliot's *Middlemarch*, Dr Lydgate considered Dorothea Brooke to be "a good creature – that fine – but a little too earnest … It is troublesome to talk to such women. They are always wanting reasons."

May-game" [46] In *Adam Bede* George Eliot humorously created her own definition of the earnest man by characterising his opposite as "Old Leisure" as:

> a contemplative, rather stout gentleman, of excellent digestion, - of quiet perceptions, undiseased by hypothesis; happy in his inability to know the causes of things, preferring the things themselves…He was not taking life seriously which meant that he had no concerns whatever with ideas. He goes to church either to sleep or to repeat the great doctrines of the creed without a moment's attention or an ounce of sincere conviction. [47]

Thomas Carlyle was of the opinion that the prophet Mohammed was "one of those who cannot but be in earnest; who Nature herself has appointed to be sincere." Mohammed asked questions such as "What am I? What is this unfathomable Thing I live in, which men name Universe? What is life, what is death? What am I to believe? What am I to do? [48] These very same questions were on the lips of the earnest and enthusiastic young men like Lushington as they individually and collectively faced the challenges of the crisis of faith. However, being earnest went beyond enquiring, it was also a lifestyle and, as such, was well expressed by Longfellow in the "Psalm of Life" when he wrote "Life is real! Life is earnest! And the grave is not its goal!"

In short, to be earnest was to recognise that human existence was not a short interval between birth and death in which one strove selfishly to make the best of life; instead it was a spiritual pilgrimage from here to eternity in which one is

[46] Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind* (Yale University Press 1957), p. 220-221.
[47] George Eliot, *Adam Bede* (Boston: Fields, Osgood, & Co. 1869) p. 300.
[48] Thomas Carlyle *Heroes and Hero-Worship* (Chapman and Hall 1858) pp 216-242.

called upon to struggle against the forces of evil, both personally and in society. Disraeli had pronounced in *Sybil*, "we live in an age when to be young and to be indifferent can no longer be synonymous." Froude wrote of Carlyle that "to everyone who took life seriously, who wished to make an honourable use of it, and could not be content with sitting down and making money, his words were like the morning reveille."[49] Carlyle's "morning reveille" was music in the ears of Lushington and was to find an echo in the sacrificial service of the positivist faith which Comte termed "altruism". But what were the issues that so deeply concerned the earnest young men like Lushington?

"Leaves in an Autumn Storm"

Alfred Tennyson, mourning his young friend Hallam, looked back wistfully to his time at Cambridge in the 1830s by recalling the "youthful friendships and spirited debates" generated by university life. Carlyle's biographer Froude recalled the 1850s as a time of buffeting by "the creeds or no creeds which in those years were whirling us … like leaves in an autumn storm".[50] Both Cambridge and Oxford in the 1850s were considered to be the nurseries of controversies and emerging new philosophies. At Oxford the dominant philosophy was the Positivism of J.S. Mill who in his "Logic", published in 1843, wrote enthusiastically of Comte. Some twenty years later, in 1865, Mill was still in agreement with Comte's general conception of history when he wrote "August Comte and Positivism". However the first real impact of Comte in England was to be made in Oxford through a group of young men at Wadham

[49] J.A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of His Life in London* (Longman, Green & Co. 1891), Vol.1, Chapter II, p. 291.
[50] Ibid.

College led by their tutor Richard Congreve. This group included E.S. Beesly, J.H. Bridges, Frederic Harrison and Vernon Lushington's brother Godfrey. Each of these young men followed what Christopher Kent described as "the well-trodden path from Oxford to Comte".[51] Godfrey Lushington became one of the first English converts to Comte's religion of humanity and it was almost certainly he who introduced his brother to Positivism.[52]

Whilst Comte's Positivism was becoming a major philosophy at Oxford, Cambridge remained largely under the influence of Samuel Coleridge who had developed the idea of a national clerisy. Many Cambridge graduates such as John Sterling, one of the founders of the Cambridge Apostles, wrote that it was Coleridge to whom he owed his education. "He taught me that an empirical philosophy is none, that Faith is the highest Reason, that all criticism, whether of literature, laws, or manners, is blind, without the power of discerning the organic unity of the object." [53] Other Cambridge students such as F.D. Maurice and Arthur Hallam acknowledged the influence of Coleridge upon their lives and it was men such as these who produced the broad-church movement of the mid nineteenth century of which Lushington's father had been a part.

[51] Christopher Kent, *Brains and Numbers: Elitism, Comtism, and Democracy in Mid-Victorian England* (University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 55.
[52] Godfrey Lushington entered Balliol College, Oxford in 1850, where he was tutored by Benjamin Jowett, who became a close friend of the Lushington family, often visiting them at Ockham Park.
[53] J. Stirling, *Essays and Tales*, 1848

"What is to be believed?"

In the middle of the 1850's the Cambridge scholar Sedley Taylor published a pamphlet on *The System of Clerical Subscription*, which questioned "the formularies which bind the conscience of the English clergy". Taylor later sent a copy to Lushington who, in enthusiastically acknowledging it, praised it contents but added that "as an interested spectator" he believed there could be but one conclusion and that was "that certain things (Article &c) are not to be believed. But the great question everywhere is – what is to be believed?"[54] Although this question was posed here in 1870 it was the very same question that had preoccupied him and like minded university students for two decades or more. If Christianity failed, they needed another Cause - a religion which would allow them to retain the moral earnestness of their evangelical forefathers without committing them to a shallow and untenable theology.

The central issues of what Froude had labelled the "autumn storm", were fuelled partly by Carlyle and Comte, and related to the ethics of religious belief and the moral consequences of unbelief. In the 1850s a large proportion of undergraduates at both Cambridge and Oxford came from Anglican parsonages and many were destined to take Holy Orders. Nearly all the tutors were ordained, and students on admission to University were required to sign the Thirty Nine Articles, attend chapel every week and abstract and summarize the sermon. However more and more of these young men, including Lushington, were beginning to question the inspiration of the Scriptures and the credibility of the

[54] Lushington to Taylor 18 January 1870. University Library, Cambridge, Add. 6259/65.

creeds as well as many of the practices of the Church of England. In February 1853 another of Lushington's Cambridge friends, James Clerk Maxwell, wrote to Lewis Campbell how, after attending chapel, he and "Farrar, Pomeroy, and Blakiston discussed eternal punishment from 8 to12."[55]

At the start of the twenty first century it is not easy to comprehend the soul searching experienced by so many intellectuals in the middle years of the nineteenth century as they faced the crisis of faith. "Above all religion occupied major place in the public consciousness, a centrality in the intellectual life of the age which it had not a century before."[56] Today an inability to accept traditional Christian dogma at face value is commonplace and a complete lack of any religious faith is widespread. In mid-nineteenth century Britain there were major ethical and practical obstacles to the casting aside of all belief and it was not until the 1880s that people like T.H. Green finally abandoned all belief.[57]

The crisis of faith had "a deceptive appearance of suddenness" brought about by a number of factors.[58] First there was the development of Biblical criticism led primarily by a group of German theological works such as Feuerbach's *Essence of Christianity* and D.F. Strauss's *Life of Jesus* which was translated into English by George Eliot in 1846. This was followed by the new discoveries in the world of scientific geology and evolution led by Charles Darwin. Both of these threw

[55] L. Campbell, *The Life of James Clerk Maxwell* p. 182. Campbell notes of Maxwell at Cambridge that "His friendships went on to multiply. To the list already given must be added the names of Hort, V. Lushington, Pomeroy, and Cecil Monro." p. 201.
[56] J.L. Altholz, *The Warfare of Conscience with Theology* in *Religion in Victorian Britain* edited by Gerald Parsons, Vol. IV Interpretations (Manchester University Press 1991), p. 150.
[57] Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) was thinly disguised as Professor Grey in Mrs Humphry Ward's 'Robert Elsmere' (1888) a novel dealing with issues relating to the crisis of faith.
[58] Altholz, p. 150

doubt on the literal truth of the Bible. Newman, in his "Apologia" wrote that "Evangelical Religion or Puritanism … had no intellectual basis; no internal idea." Froude wrote: "The controversies of the place had unsettled the faith which we had inherited." Added to this there was a growing repugnance towards the ethical implications of some basic Christian doctrine such as original sin and eternal punishment and linked to this was the failure of the churches to respond adequately to the growing social crisis. The Bible had been the cornerstone of English Protestantism and "if God and the Bible no longer commanded absolute allegiance, what was there for man to serve?" [59] Comte appeared to be the man for the hour and his religion of humanity seemed to fill the resulting spiritual vacuum. The decade of the 1850s was not always one of losing faith. For some young intellectuals such as Lushington it proved to a time of finding a new one.

The Cambridge Union[60]

The "controversies of the place" readily received an airing within the walls of the Cambridge Union, a debating society, founded in 1815, following the union of three other societies. Some indication of the type of debate taking place immediately prior to Lushington coming up to Cambridge can be found in the *Life and Letters of Fenton John Anthony Hort*, a Fellow of Trinity, who was President of the Union in the October term of 1852.[61] Matters debated included the Crusades, the poetical merits of Tennyson and Byron, and Palmerston's

[59] Lushington's later radical views on the Bible were later expressed in a paper he wrote for a meeting of the London Positivists. This will be discussed in a later chapter.
[60] All references from the Cambridge Union Debates in this section are from the Minute Books held by Cambridge University Library. Ref: CUL Cambridge Union Society Archives, Volumes 15 – 17.
[61] *Hort* p. 177.

policy "on the Greek question". Montague Butler's belief that Lushington was a good speaker was confirmed when he joined the Union shortly after entering Trinity College and became an active participant in many of the debates over the next few years.

Given the paucity of correspondence or other material from this period in the Lushington archive, the records of the Union debates provide a crucial insight into where Lushington stood on a number of the issues concerning him at this time.[62] Lushington's first recorded participation in a debate was on the 24 February 1852 when the motion was "That the Colonial Policy of this Country – as at present administered – is, in principle and detail, opposed to the true interests of Great Britain." Cobden and radicals were keen to see the break up of the Empire. They considered that the colonies had been valued for the control of their trade; the acceptance of free trade rendered them valueless. Lushington, a keen supporter of Cobden, spoke against the motion, which was however carried by a majority of twelve. Anti-colonisation was also as an aspect of Comte's Positivism and may have added to Lushington's feelings in this matter.[63] The following week Lushington fully nailed his colours to the mast as a radical when he took to the floor to speak against the motion "That the Conservative is the only true and safe policy for Englishmen, and that the theories of Reformers – whether called Radicals, Chartists, or Christian-Socialists – are fraught with the greatest danger to the welfare and dignity of the Country." By this time

[62] In his essay "Cambridge" in the *Strand Magazine*, (7 January, 1894), pp. 507-512, (p. 512), St. J. Basil Wynne Willson, in writing of the Cambridge Union in the 1857 and 1858, wrote of Lushington that he "forcible, but not suave enough" in his debating skills.

[63] Lushington's later views were expressed in a manuscript lecture on "The State", given the Positivist Society at Newton Hall on 14 April 1889 in my possession. Lushington declared "We want peace: we want no new wars, no fresh colonisations, no new invasions on weaker races."

Lushington had become involved with the Christian Socialists and so his opposition to this motion is not surprising. However, once again, and despite support from Leslie Stephen, Lushington found himself in the minority and the motion was carried by thirty votes to sixteen. Lushington's support for Cobden and the more radical politicians of the time expressed again when he supported a motion commending "Mr Cobden and the leaders of the independent party" as being "upright, consistent, and commendable".[64]

By 1853 a marked change is found in Lushington's political and social thinking. In March of that year he supported a motion "That the principles of democracy are not conducive to the intellectual and material advancement of a nation." This supports a view that many mid-nineteenth century English Liberals were not necessarily "democrats" – in fact many of them, including Lushington's father, were decidedly not in favour of even male universal suffrage.[65] Lushington's stance here also brings together the ideologies of both Carlyle and Comte. Carlyle's strong distaste for democracy, which he called "mobocracy", had been characteristically and firmly expressed in his *Latter-Day Pamphlets* published in 1850. Carlyle's preference was for strong, charismatic leadership verging on

[64] A letter in the Lushington archive (SHC.7854/3/1) further confirms Lushington's regard for Cobden. On 3 April 1865, after reading of Cobden's death, Lushington wrote to his wife expressing his sorrow at the news. He wrote "Poor Cobden! Everybody must feel his loss to the country. Through you, I seem to feel more closely to his loss to his family (for you have told me so much about them, & I do not forget taking Mrs Cobden down to supper that evening in 84" [i.e. 84 Eccleston Square, the London home of Lushington's wife's family] and how he had hoped that he might have got "really acquainted with him [Cobden]. It is always a great treat to me to meet in a familiar way those who have done good service to the State. As is it is I have met him once only – one Sunday evening at Mr Potter's, & then for a few minutes only. I remember his clear decisive manner of conversing (tho' the subject has slipt from me) & his daughter Katie watching his words as they fell."

[65] Waddams p. 41.

dictatorship.[66] Comte took a similar view which was summed up in the following statement from *A Positivist Primer* published in 1871. "We insist that it is impossible for an army to direct its own movements, - it must have a general. We do not believe in Democracy, nor in universal suffrage. We believe these are temporary forms of government leading to the normal state of society, in which the rich will be the rulers of the people as well as the holders of the wealth."[67] The seeds of Lushington's preference for strong dictatorial leadership, which are seen here were later developed by him in a paper on "The State" given the London Positivists in 1889, where, after acknowledging the contribution to society by some forms of democratic government, he goes on to state that, "None have broken down obstructive Priesthoods or lawless militarism more effectively than Dictators: none have presided over more brilliant progress: witness Roman Emperors, French Monarchs, Frederic the Great."[68] In that same paper, and still on the subject of democracy, Lushington, rather pointedly, notes that "John Bright did not suffer his family or carpet factory to be ruled by popular suffrage."

A blending of the ideas of both Carlyle and Comte surfaced again in a debate held in May 1853 when Lushington brought himself into conflict with both the Christian Socialists and the radical policies of Cobden and Bright by surprisingly proposing the motion "That the principle of competition assailed by the Christian Socialists, is the natural and necessary principle of Commercial Dealing; and therefore, also, the basis of all Commercial Prosperity". This was in distinct

[66] Carlyle's *Latter-Day Pamphlets* had been the subject of a Union debate in May 1850 after which Fenton Hort wrote to the Rev. John Ellerton "How noble Carlyle continues in spite of some nonsense! We had a capital Union debate on the Latter-Day Pamphlets; of course I defended him most warmly." *Life and Letters of Fenton J. Hort*, p. 51.
[67] C.G. David, *A Positivist Primer Being a Series of Familiar Conversations on the Religion of Humanity* (New York: David Wesley & Co., 1871) p. 63.
[68] Lushington, *The State* (1889).

opposition to the support for the Christian Socialists which he had voiced the previous year. The Christian Socialists took the view that economic competition is immoral and engendered human exploitation. F.D. Maurice had written to Charles Kingsley that "Competition is put forth as the law of the universe. That is a lie. The time has come for us to declare that it is a lie by word and deed." [69] Carlyle had derided the results of unrestricted competition attacking what he called "mammon worship". Ruskin and Matthew Arnold also shared similar views. It is unfortunate that no record exists of what was said at this debate. However, to quote again from *A Positivist Primer*, the Positivists believed that "Co-operation is an attempt to put the cart before the horse. Its success, so far, has been very partial indeed, even as a temporary measure."[70] The Positivists believed that co-operation was a step backward in the history of industrialism. In the Positivist world wealth would be in the hands of a minority who, being governed by the spirit of altruism, would be disposed to care for the welfare of the working classes who were considered to be of a lesser intellect. Here Lushington indicates his growing differences with the Christian Socialists.

Two other debates in 1853 provided Lushington with an opportunity to express his social concerns. He unsuccessfully proposed the motion "That our present system of Education, whereby classical literature is generally required as the first and chief knowledge, is unwise and should be reformed." Later in the year he spoke in favour of a motion opposing the "the present existing Game Laws" which were considered "injurious to the Agriculturist" and "detrimental to the morality and well being of the lower classes". However, despite Lushington's

[69] Colloms, p. 69.
[70] *A Positivist Primer*, p. 63.

eloquence the "establishment" won the votes by a majority of thirteen. Early in 1853 Russia revived her questionable claims to a general protectorate over the Christians in the Ottoman Empire. This was to prove the opening volley that eventually led to the outbreak of the Crimean War a year later. On the 8 November 1853 the Union debated the motion: "That the demands of Russia upon Turkey are inadmissible, and that it is the duty and for the interest of England to oppose them, even at the hazard of war." In this debate Lushington imbibed the pacifism of Cobden and Bright and was reluctant to take any step that might lead to war despite the fact that most of the Christian Socialists favoured the war because they were greatly opposed to the Tsar.[71] However, in a complete volte-face, one year later, Lushington wrote a strongly reasoned argument defending Britain's going to war.[72]

Lushington's political leanings were again confirmed when, in February 1853, he proposed his first motion at a Union debate. The motion was "That the late Whig Government has claims to our respect and esteem; on account of their able administration of public affairs; and the measures of high public usefulness which they brought forward and carried." Lushington was unsuccessful, there being a majority against of seven. The influence of Comte, albeit unwittingly, is found when, in April 1853, Lushington spoke against the motion "That this House is of the opinion that the introduction of vote by ballot is desirable, as a means of securing the purity of elections." Voting in secrecy ran counter to one of the chief commandments of Comtism which was "Live openly." It was also a

[71] Vogeler p. 17.
[72] Vernon Lushington, *How Shall the Just Man Use His Strength?* (London: Bell and Daldy 1855). This publication will be discussed in the following chapter.

point which coincided with Coleridge's ideal of the clerisy.[73] In opposing this motion, Lushington placed himself in opposition to his father in this matter. Stephen Lushington was a wholehearted supporter of the secret ballot "maintaining that it was the only sure preventative of bribery and intimidation."[74] Lushington again demonstrated his political affiliation when he spoke against the motion "That the recent letters of Mr Cobden have wholly failed in their attempt to ascribe the origin of the French Revolutionary War to the policy of Mr Pitt's 'First Administration'". Unfortunately for Lushington he was again in the minority and the motion was carried by sixteen votes to six.

During 1854 Lushington took part in a number of debates relating to issues of the day. In May he spoke against two motions. The first was "That a representative Government would be conducive to the healthy action of the Established Church" and the second, and perhaps rather regressive, motion "That England should look, for her future greatness, rather to the agricultural than manufacturing industry." In the same month Lushington supported the motion "That this House views with pleasure the introduction of a bill into Parliament for the abolition of Church-Rates."[75] In October of that same year Lushington was elected President of the Union and, the following day, be spoke against the motion "The Allies should make the reconstruction of Kingdom of Poland a Condition of Peace."[76] The following month Lushington, following the custom,

[73] Comte, *Positive Polity*, IV, liii, 332-3.
[74] Waddams, p. 41.
[75] Frederic Harrison had taken a similar stance on this matter in a debate at the Oxford Union. See Vogeler p. 26.
[76] In 1863 Lushington wrote, "Is Poland to be a free Poland or a well-governed Russian dependency; & in either case how? … The outcry against Russian cruelty, which you echo, is just; but by itself is but a cry". Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 19 April 1863.

temporarily vacated the chair so that he could speak against the motion "The acquisition of Cuba by the United States, would be advantageous to the interests of Europe and of that island." This related to the Ostend Manifesto of 1854 which was a scheme for the United States to purchase Cuba from Spain. The United States sought to acquire Cuba as a slave state and was denounced by both the Northern United States and Europe. Apart from any political reason, Lushington's stance on this issue accords with the Positivist view against imperial and colonial expansion by any nation.

Again in November Lushington vacated the chair to join with Leslie Stephen to support the motion "That this house views the proposed admission of Dissenters to the Universities as an act of wisdom and justice." The vexed question of admitting to the Universities those who had chosen to dissent form the Church of England had been a matter for discussion for several decades and led the Bishop of London to argue in the House of Lords that to open the universities was to 'persecute' the Church. The fact was that the issue primarily at stake from the dons' point of view was their fear that extended church patronage, then, largely in the gift of the universities, might be thrown open to the country at large, and that the very comfortable way in which the colleges could make financial provisions for their own members would be disrupted." [77] The university radicals believed that the nation's established institutions must embrace the various excluded groups in English Society, such as the dissenters and working classes, so as to give a fuller sense of participation in the life of the nation. This debate attracted great interest and the motion was lost by fifty seven votes to fifty four.

[77] Martha McMacklin Garlin, *Cambridge Before Darwin. The Ideal of a Liberal Education 1800-1860* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 73-4.

Other debates in which Lushington participated included the motion "That Thackeray is the novelist of the age". Lushington spoke against and found himself, for once, on the winning side. Again he was on the winning side when he spoke in favour of the motion "That it is the duty of Austria and Prussia, to give active support to England and France during the present struggle." Lushington seems not to have been present in December 1854 when the motion proposed was "That Shelley is the greatest Poet that has appeared in England since the accession of George III." Not only did Lushington have an abiding love for Shelley's verse, often quoting lines from the poet in his lectures and on other occasions, but Shelley was also honoured by Comte who decided to add him as an alternate to Byron. Alexander Smith, a Scottish Positivist, send excerpts of *Revolt of Islam* and *Prometheus Unbound* to Comte because he believed that Shelley seemed to speak about "subjective immortality" and "the cherished object" being reanimated "in an adoring brain."[78]

Lushington's final recorded participation in a debate was on 12 December 1854 when he opposed the motion "That it is the duty of Her Majesty's Ministers, at the earliest possible opportunity to attempt the carrying out of a system of National Education freed from sectarian conditions." Lushington's opposition to this motion appears uncharacteristic of one who believed passionately in education for all and who was struggling with his religious beliefs. However it does indicate the growing influence of Comte's influence on him as the Positivists opposed state interference in education or religion. Cobden and Bright

[78] Ellis to Comte, April 1, 1857 (La Maison de Auguste Comte, Paris).

were also very dubious about state education because inevitably the state church would be centrally involved.

Before his election as President of the Union Lushington had, in 1853, served as its librarian and secretary. During his term of office as librarian it was proposed that Harriet Martineau's two-volume translation of Comte's *Cours de Philosophie positive* be added to the library at this time.[79] The controversial nature of this book led to a further proposal at the Committee meeting that "Miss Martineau's translation of A. Comte be omitted from the list selected by the Library Committee." This move probably reflected the disapproval of Whewell of Comte and his writings. In the event the matter was put to the vote and the book was retained. The publication of Martineau's English translation of Comte in 1853 opened up his work to a much wider audience and undoubtedly contributed to his influence in Cambridge at this time.

Lushington's contributions to the Cambridge Union stood him in good stead for his future career in the legal profession. They are also of great importance in understanding his mental and intellectual development at this time. His support for Cobden and his policies confirm Lushington to be as described by Wilfred Heely – "extremely Radical, but not wildly". Moreover they show the growing influence of both Thomas Carlyle and Auguste Comte on his thinking. The Lushingtons had, of course, been allied with the Whig party for several generations but Vernon came up to Cambridge with a reasonably "blank-sheet"

[79] Almost contemporaneously with Lushington's term of office as Librarian, Frederic Harrison was holding the same post at the Oxford Union where he proposed the acquisition of Martineau's translation. Minutes of the Oxford Union Society, viii, 14 November and December 1853, 20 February 1854. Godfrey Lushington was also a member of the Oxford Union.

in terms of his politics and philosophy. The liberality of his family upbringing meant that, unlike many of his contemporaries, he had few preconceptions to contend with as an undergraduate. What he did bring with him was in terms of character - a passion for justice, fair play and social concern. Lushington can be likened to Frederic Harrison who possessed, "conviction without bigotry, piety without fanaticism, true Faith, not without reason." [80] The Cambridge Union provided Lushington with the platform he needed both to exercise his passion for justice and social concern and, through debate, develop his own powers of critical thinking especially relating to political and ideological issues. A glimpse into some of the literary influences on Lushington at the time is found in a letter to H.G. Seeley in which he wrote that he had been reading:

> … some Chaucer & Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*; a grand heroic story. It was new to me, and gave me a proud regard for Dutchmen wh. I never had before. It also started me thinking on several political subjects, persecution, foreign policy, constitutional government &c &c." Chaucer also was new <u>to me</u>; & very delightful was his simplicity, & joyous free humour, sometimes a good deal too free. Nevertheless this in my judgement is his greatest quality, a true <u>brotherly</u> humour. You shd. read the Reeve's Tale about the Miller of Trumpington (in vol. 1). Bawdy tho' it be, it is excellent. [81]

[80] Vogeler p. 20.
[81] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 8 August 1861.

"A delightful society to belong to"[82]

Whilst the Cambridge Union was an important area in developing Lushington's thinking, there was also another more select and perhaps elite group within which current issues could be debated. Commonly known as the Apostles, the Cambridge Conversazione Society had been founded in 1830 by Tennyson, Arthur Hallam, Richard Monkton Milnes and John Sterling. The group, which included many of the brightest undergraduates, had an active core of about six members and its aura of exclusivity was enhanced by the semi-secret nature of its existence. It had as its purpose the investigation and discussion of topics in "higher philosophy".[83] It is now generally considered the Apostles were "the cradle of the Broad Church movement".[84] Lushington was duly elected to the Apostles and this resulted in a strong corporate bond that lasted a lifetime. His fellow students and friends James Clerk Maxwell and Frederick William Farrar, who became Head Master of Marlborough, were also Apostles.[85]

John Sterling had endeavoured to introduce the Apostles to a wider world by establishing a dining club which included artists, writers, statesmen and the two greatest British thinkers of the day, J.S. Mill and Thomas Carlyle and it may have been at a meeting of the Apostles that Lushington first met the latter. F.D. Maurice who was credited with leaving among the society a fruitful tradition of

[82] Lushington to John Martineau, February 1855. Martineau p. 87..
[83] Frances Brookfield, *The Cambridge Apostles* (New York, 1906), p. 3.
[84] Garland p. 84 and p. 158, n. 75.
[85] 26 March 1903 Vernon to Susan Lushington (SHC7854/Box11) "Tomorrow I must be up betimes to go to Dean Farrar's funeral. For I must tell you that after a long illness he died last Sunday – another of my oldest friends gone. We were undergraduates together 50 years ago - & very intimate. He had his faults, but many qualities." Farrar's novel *Julian Home* is a take on College life, of which the local colour is derived from Trinity College.

"the questioning mind, theological uncertainty, political liberalism, and moral earnestness, all of which were to be considered characteristic of the best minds of the coming age."[86] The Apostles continued to influence English intellectual life throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth.

The Apostles have been described as, "artistic, moral, and intellectual; sensitive and plucky; intellectual aristocrats at the intersection of the university and professions."[87] Henry Sidgwick wrote that the group "demanded the pursuit of truth with absolute devotion and unreserved."[88] Lushington was certainly all of these and would have been viewed as a most suitable candidate for this elite society. A likely candidate for the Apostles might be elected at about twenty years of age but seldom in his first year. So it was that Lushington was elected as Apostle Number 132 in February 1854. Just one year later Lushington wrote with affection of the society to John Martineau:

> You ask me about the Apostles. In the first place I must tell you it is a *Secret Society*; next, that I belonged to it, which will forbid my saying much. I always thought that secrecy ill-advised; harmful, if anything, to the Society, and a great bore to the members who have, as I curious friends. However, in deference to old custom, I keep my mouth sealed as well as I can. I may tell you this, however, that it is a delightful Society to belong to: it comprises all the best Trinity men, and has led to many

[86] A.W. Brown, *The Metaphysical Society. Victorian Minds in Crisis, 1869-1880* (Columbia University Press, 1947), p. 2.
[87] W.C. Lubenow, *The Cambridge Apostles, 1820-1914. Liberalism, imagination and friendship in British intellectual and professional life* (Cambridge University Press, 1998) p. 13.
[88] A.S. Sidgwick and E.M. Sidgwick, *Henry Sidgwick. A Memoir*, (London, Mcmillan, 1906), p. 34.

> beautiful friendships, Tennyson's and Hallam's for one; this also, that there is no use stirring yourself to be elected, for the offer always comes from them. On Wednesday, Ed. [possibly Edward Burne-Jones] and I go to hear Ruskin hold forth on 'Drawing' and hope to learn a few good thoughts. He is one of the men who has some breath of inspiration in him, and breathing power too. [89]

The Apostles met every Saturday in the rooms of the man who was to read the essay which was to be discussed.[90] The meetings began with tea "to which anchovy toast was an indispensable, and perhaps symbolic, adjunct."[91] After tea the essay was read and discussion ensued around the fireside. Unfortunately little is known of the papers given during Lushington's time as an Apostle but, in 1851, his friend Fenton J.A. Hort presented his first paper, which had the title "Might is Right". This was a strongly worded defence of Carlyle. A biographical account of Hort by his son gives details of some of the other subjects that were debated.[92] Lushington considered Hort "the most remarkable figure of our time", and that he "always spoke very seriously on these occasions."[93] When an Apostle went down from Cambridge, he retained his links with the Society, as membership was for life. Release from the Apostles was by way of a ceremony called "taking wings". A distinguished Apostle, chosen by his predecessor, organised an annual dinner with the assistance of the most recently elected

[89] Lushington to John Martineau, February 1855. Reproduced in Martineau p. 87.
[90] Some idea of the subjects debated when Lushington was meeting with the Apostles are found in *The Life of James Clerk Maxwell*. These include "Morality. Is Eternal Truth obtainable from an Individual Point of View", "Envelopment: Can Ideas be developed with Reference to Things as their developing Authorities", and "What is the Nature of Evidence of Design".
[91] Sidgwick, p. 29.
[92] *Hort*, pp. 170-171.
[93] Ibid, p. 171

Apostle and served as President at the event. In 1869 Lushington presided at such a dinner and his presence, as an elder statesman at another dinner held at the Star and Garter in Richmond in 1899, was later recalled by the philosopher, G.E. Moore.[94] Lushington, like the majority of Apostles, continued to support reform at the University and, in the Senate House Poll of 1905, he was one of those who voted for the abolition of the Little-Go.[95]

Just as the Cambridge Union had provided Lushington with an arena in which to exercise his talents as a speaker on issues of the day, the Apostles provided him with a more intimate opportunity to develop his own thinking by spending time with men many of whom were destined to become national leaders in their chosen spheres. Lushington's friend Sidgwick considered that "the tie of attachment to the society is the strongest corporate bond which I have known in life".[96] Undoubtedly this was also the case for Lushington especially as he later became an "Apostle" of another sort, namely of Positivism. It was through the relationships forged within the Apostles that Lushington would find entrance to new networks of social, cultural and political life which he would seek to influence with the ideas of Comte and the Religion of Humanity. In 1869 William Everett, another Apostle, wrote to Henry Jackson stating that "apostolic talk" was "anti-religious" and that Comte and Spencer were all the rage.[97]

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[94] Levy, p. 208.
[95] *List of Members of the Senate who Voted on Friday and Saturday, March 3 and 4, 1905*. Quoted in Lubenow p. 353.
[96] Sidgwick MSS, Trinity College, Cambridge. Autobiographical fragment, 1900. Quoted in Harvie, p. 64.
[97] Everett to Henry Jackson, 25 March 1873, Trinity College, MS Add. c.29, in H.C. Porter, 'A Harvard Unitarian in Victorian Cambridge' in Journal of Ecclesiastical History 53/3 (2002), 527-544.

"& for good company true brother students"[98]

The Cambridge Union and the Apostles were Lushington's introduction into the world of clubs and societies which lay at the heart of Victorian culture and administration. They were important areas for socialising and networking and, perhaps for Lushington, useful in his attempts to spread Positivism. Like the Apostles they were tightly knit all-male groups which appealed particularly to young unmarried men and events such as lectures, together with collective action in the public interest, were deemed as less in conflict with domestic values than some other sorts of activities. This was well expressed by the fictitious Robert Elsmere when he proclaimed from the platform, "Let combination and brotherhood do for the newer and simple faith what they did once for the old – let them give it a practical shape."[99] Not only that but these all-male associations could also assist a man's access to the public sphere. Until his marriage at the age of thirty-three Lushington had lived almost exclusively in male company. Tosh has written that "as social identity, masculinity is constructed in three arenas – home, work and all male association."[100] Lushington's domestic life as a Positivist is the subject of a later chapter and I have deliberately chosen not to cover his professional life. However given that the latter arena of "all male association" was important to Lushington both in his formative years and after his marriage, it calls for some comment here.

[98] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 8 August 1861.
[99] Mrs Humphry Ward, *Robert Elsmere* (New York, John W. Lovell Company 1889) p. 561.
[100] John Tosh, *A Man's Place: Masculinity and the Middle-Class Home in Victorian England*, (Yale University Press, 1999), p. 2.

Lushington's education at Haileybury and his time in the navy instigated the range of homo-social activities which he developed and continued into his marriage. University life at this time was of course an all male arena and had provided Lushington with a group of kindred spirits such as William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones and others who shared a common vision which was ultimately expressed in the flowering of the second phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. The Christian Socialists and the Working Men's College were two more all male preserves in which were found the cross-class promotion of manly love and comradeship.[101] "Friendship drenched in emotion was a key characteristic of the godliness and good learning brigade."[102] Montague Butler wrote of Lushington and his Cambridge friend Edward Babington that "It was beautiful to see them together."[103] Hamilton writes "Same-sex intensities and jealousies could flourish publicly without observers assuming that the two friends had gone to bed."[104] In 1864 George Grove, a fellow Apostle, spent part of a holiday in Italy with Lushington.[105] The following year he wrote to Lushington on the eve of the latter's wedding:

> Yes! I got your letter and very much it pleased me – not only by what it told: but by the way it had and by the sweet David & Jonathan tone towards me which filled it. I am not a humbug in saying that I am not worthy of your friendship but I accept it with the greatest pleasure &

[101] A Working Women's College was founded in 1874 and later renamed The Frances Martin College.
[102] Jeffrey Richards, '"Passing the love of Women"': manly love and Victorian Society" in *Manliness and Morality: middle-class masculinity in Britain and* America, ed. J.A. Morgan & James Walvin (Manchester University Press, 1987), pp. 92 -122 (p.104).
[103] Edward Graham, *The Harrow Life of Henry Montague Butler*, (Longman, Green & Co., London, 1920) p. 67.
[104] Ian Hamilton, *A Gift Imprisoned: The Poetic Life of Matthew Arnold*, (Bloomsbury Publishing Plc., 1998), p. 76.
[105] Charles Graves, *The Life and Letters of Sir George Grove*, (Macmillan & Co., 1903).

> hope… Shall I ever see you? I shall remember Sunday and Monday 28th & 29th Aug/64 and look back on them, with the charming willow light of distance softening and sweetening many features.[106]

This letter demonstrates what Newsome, writing of the first half of the nineteenth century, has described as "Inseparable from this ardent craving for activity was the tendency to emotionalism and to passionate friendship."[107] Grove's reference to their "David & Jonathan" friendship echoes the relationships to which Lushington was exposed through his friendships within the circle of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood where Moyle writes the "huge passions these young men felt, their energy, camaraderie and relative poverty, bound them together in a social intimacy that if not directly homosexual was certainly very intense, sensual and often physically demonstrative."[108] Such a display of emotion can be found in the correspondence of Lushington with Harry Govier Seeley, a man seven years his junior who was struggling with finding his vocation in life.[109] Later to become an eminent palaeontologist and geologist, Seeley, in the 1860s, found an outlet for his struggling emotions through writing poetry. On receiving some of Seeley's verses, Lushington wrote to him, "I go along with your thoughts on the Beautiful I think wholly, though perhaps I shd. express the same doctrine a little differently, and – at least at this moment I dare not venture to meet you with phrases passionate & rightly passionate as yours."[110] However, as

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[106] George Grove to Lushington, 13 February 1865. Lushington archive, uncatalogued.
[107] David Newsome, *Godliness and Good Learning. Four Studies on a Victorian Ideal* (Cassell, 1961), p. 83.
[108] F. Moyle, *Desperate Romantics. The Private Lives of the Pre-Raphaelites*, (John Murray, 2009), p. 59.
[109] Seeley was a pupil at the Working Men's College in the early 1860s and became the curator of its museum.
[110] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 11 April 1862.

Newsome, has pointed out, such expressions of inner feelings became less usual with the development of the manliness cult and the stiff-upper-lip in the 1870's and 80's, "for it would never have done for Empire builders and games players to exhibit their emotions."[111]

During the years between his leaving Cambridge and his marriage to Jane, Lushington often travelled with male friends both in this country and abroad. In May 1857 Lushington journeyed to the Isle of Wight with Thomas Woolner to visit the Tennysons at Farringford where they stayed for a few days exploring the countryside with the poet who read them extracts of his verse including *Maud*. [112] In 1860 Lushington travelled to Italy with William Rossetti where they visited the Brownings.[113] Rossetti later recalled the visit and how Browning himself met them at the railway station in Sienna.[114] Lushington continued these overseas excursions after his marriage, his correspondence revealing visits to Northern France and a return visit to Italy with his positivist friend John Henry Middleton. Of course it may have been that Jane was not able to join her husband on these visits, because of her regular confinements and the demands of motherhood.

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[111] Newsome, p. 83.

[112] Lushington's cousin Edmund was Tennyson's brother in law. This visit was recorded by Emily Tennyson: see *The Farringford Journal of Emily Tennyson, 185 – 1864* ed. R.J. Hutchings and ors. (The Isle of Wight County Press, 1986) pp.57-58.

[113] SHC7854/3/19. 25 August 1882, Vernon to Jane Lushington from Siena, "Here 22 years I met the Brownings, who were spending the summer in a villa about a mile out of the City. I remember her demonstrative affection for her boy – a little fellow of 10 or 11 with long brown hair, & her somewhat excessive ardour of speech in political & other matters – which Browning took care to temper with humorous remarks – and here too Browning introduced William Rossetti & me to old Savage Landor – then under his friendly charge." Lushington called on the Carlyles shortly after returning from this visit with messages from the Brownings. Shortly afterwards he wrote a lengthy letter describing his visit to the Carlyles to Elizabeth Barrett Browning dated 9 November 1860 which was published in *Some Unpublished Papers of Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning* in Harper's Magazine March 1916. The original letter is now in the Browning Collection, Ella Strong Denison Library, Scripps College.

[114] Rossetti, *Some Reminiscences*, p.p. 237 -241.

Kent has noted that "most of the Comtists were devoted clubmen" and Lushington was no exception.[115] Although not strictly a club Lushington attended the "tobacco parliaments" held each Thursday evening at the London home of Alexander Macmillan. Here on any evening he might have met Tennyson, Coventry Patmore, Herbert Spencer, Thomas Hughes, T.H. Huxley, Francis Palgrave and other leading intellectuals. The group would gather around a large table, made by craftsmen from the Working Men's College, to discuss issues of the day. Arthur Munby recorded Lushington's presence at Macmillan's on 3 March 1859 together with Richard Litchfield (destined to be Darwin's son-in-law) and Frederick Furnivall. There was a heated debate on geology and Genesis with "Vernon mediating in his clear earnest way".[116] After leaving Cambridge Lushington joined a number of other all male coteries such as the University Club and the Athenaeum which Collini has identified as one of the sites where the higher intellectual stratum of London society gathered.[117] Lushington's election to these clubs confirmed his status as a member of the intellectual elite.[118] In 1858, Vernon and Godfrey Lushington joined as two of the few non-artist members of the Hogarth Club.[119] In 1864 Vernon became an

[115] Kent, p. 88.
[116] The following month, on 26 April, Munby recorded how he had "Walked with Litchfield and Vernon L to Macmillan's – Found there Masson the Editor of the Magazine, Alexander Munro, Professor Austed, and several others. Tennyson was there last Thursday – if one had only known it. He has written his name in capitals of the rim of the big round table."
[117] Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991), p. 15.
[118] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 11 November 1868. "Last night I dined at the Athenaeum again … I have remembered to send in my resignation of the University Club, so now I am Athenaeum pure and simple – But a married man!" SHC 7854/3/5. The Athenaeum was "famous for having the best library in London as well as the worst food." H.S. Jones, *Intellect and Character in Victorian England: Mark Pattison and the Invention of the Don*, CUP (2007) p. 86.
[119] The Hogarth Club was an exhibiting society and social club founded in 1858 and dissolved in 1861. Its members included the Rossetti brothers, Maddox Brown, and Holman Hunt. The Hogarth Club: 1858-1861 by Deborah Cherry in The Burlington Magazine, Vol. 122, No. 925. (Apr., 1980), pp. 236-244.

early member of the Ad Eudem Club which had been formed by the Sidgwick brothers to unite the liberals in both Cambridge and Oxford.

In 1865 Lushington became a founding member of the Century Club whose founding cause was that of university reform. *Essays in Reform* and *Questions for a Reformed Parliament*, both of which appeared in 1867, were virtually a manifesto of the Club. After the Apostles this was perhaps the most influential society of which Lushington became a member. It was seen as the successor of the university debating and discussion groups and "was to have, not a social character, but a political and intellectual character" consisting "not of celebrities or of pleasant fellows, but keen workers in the cause of thought and popular progress".[120] It was founded by Frederic Harrison in London to, "uphold definite and very strict principles of political and religious liberalism. It was to help fight the battles which Gladstone and Bright, Mill and Spencer, were fighting in Parliament and public opinion".[121] One of the club's founding causes was university reform – an area of particular interest to the Lushington twins and, as noted earlier in this chapter, it was the issue which led Godfrey to contribute his sole contribution to *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. Members of the Century also upheld the cause of the American Union, planned the strategy of the Eyre agitation, and discussed parliamentary reform.[122] At the Century Lushington mixed with such distinguished members such as Walter Bagehot, Sir Charles Dilke, Thomas Hughes, T.H. Huxley, Walter Pater, Herbert Spencer,

[120] F. Harrison, "The Century Club", *Cornhill* (1903) reprinted in *Realities and Ideals* (Macmillan, 1908) p. 371.
[121] Ibid, p. 376.
[122] The Century Club fathered the Radical Club in 1870 and ultimately expanded into the National Liberal Club in 1882. See Harvie p. 128 and Kent pp. 32-3.

Leslie Stephen, G.O. Trevelyan and W.E. Forster.[123] Another member was the Scottish theologian Edward Caird who did so much to help the Protestant denominations accommodate Comte and his philosophy at the end of the nineteenth century.[124] Lushington was also a founder member of The Saville Club, founded in 1867 as a literary, academic and arts club. Here he mixed with like-minded friends such as Charles Darwin, Sir Charles Dilke, Viscount Goshen, John Morley and W.E. Forster. After her father's death, Susan Lushington presented the club with a clock which was inscribed "Presented to the Saville Club by Miss Lushington in Memory of Vernon Lushington, K.C., an Original Member, and for many years a Trustee of the Club."[125]

The legal profession was another all male preserve and as a young barrister travelling on the Northern Circuit, Lushington made a number of other close friends including Herbert Duckworth who later married Julia Jackson.[126] The Positivists, although regarding the opposite sex with the greatest esteem verging on veneration and allowing them to attend public meetings, were primarily yet another all male group.[127] However, important though male friendship may have been it was not "a secure basis for fully achieved masculine status – only marriage could do that."[128] Lushington's correspondence indicates that he did enjoy several innocent attachments of a romantic nature. The tone of some of his

[123] The Club tried to establish a classless quality by recruiting prominent working class-leaders like Robert Applegarth but the subscription was too high.
[124] E. Caird, *The Social Philosophy and Religion of Comte* (Glasgow: J. Maclehose & Sons, 1885).
[125] *The Saville Club 186 8to 1923* (printed privately) p. 66.
[126] After Duckworth's death, Julia married Leslie Stephen and became the mother of Virginia – better known as Virginia Woolf. The Lushington and Stephen families were particularly close and spent a good deal of time at each others London homes.
[127] In addition to Frederic Harrison's wife, George Eliot, Emma Hardy and Godfrey Lushington's wife Beatrice attended Positivists meetings in London.
[128] Tosh, p. 110.

letters to Joanna Richardson suggest something more than a platonic friendship and it is highly probable that at one time he considered pursuing Mrs Gaskell's daughter Florence Emily. But it was to be in the person of Jane Mowatt that Lushington finally found his life partner. However before marriage Lushington needed to establish himself in the career which had been chosen for him.

"Intended … for the law"

Lushington's career had been planned for him by his father. This he disclosed in a letter to Monkton Milnes in 1855. In writing about Montague Butler's possible appointment as Secretary to a Cabinet Minister, Lushington said that the post had been offered to him but:

> I have written to my father about it, but have as yet, had no answer. I am, however, pretty sure, that even if the offer was out & out, & the Minister ever so good & great a man, he would counsel me to say No Thank you. For he has all along of late years intended me for the law.[129]

Lushington was admitted to the Inner Temple in 1852 and called to the bar in 1857. A brief glimpse of his life at this time is found in a letter from Godfrey Lushington to Wilfred Blunt in December 1857.

[129] Lushington to Monkton Milnes, 17 November, 1855. Trinity College Library. Houghton 15/113-4. In 1853 Stephen Lushington wrote to Franklin Lushington concerning Vernon's legal career "I do not expect him to make money in my life time." Leicester County Archives. DE1274/1/f137b.

> Would you like to live with Vernon and me at Doctors Commons? Let me tell you what you have to expect, if you come. In the first place I have no separate bed-room to offer you. However my bedroom is a very large one with all sorts of corners in it, one of which seems made to hold a second bed. A College friend has before now, lived a week with me sleeping in this corner. As to sitting-room you should share mine, but as I am always away in chambers from 9.30 to 6, you would practically have it to yourself in the morning. In the evening I should generally be there but it is large enough to hold us both. As to meals you would have breakfast with us, have luncheon by yourself, and our servant Mrs Green is a very fair cook, or you will dine with you alone as the case might be. There is tobacco ad libitum. You would have a latch key, making your own agreement with your Uncle Henry as to late hours. The only responsibly Vernon & I would undertake is not to lead you into mischief.[130]

It is unlikely that Blunt took up this offer, which was probably just as well given that he later became notoriously prone to "mischief", gaining a reputation as a sexual adventurer, his "conquests" including William Morris's wife.[131]

[130] West Sussex Record Office. Blunt Box 35. Wilfred Blunt was probably known to the Lushingtons through the lengthy holidays he spent with his Uncle, Henry Currie, on his estate at West Horsley Place which neighboured Ockham Park where the Lushington boys grew up. Blunt later married Lady Annabella King-Noel, Bryon's granddaughter. It is not known whether Blunt took up Godfrey and Vernon's offer, but the following year he entered the Diplomatic Service and was posted to Greece. Blunt remained a friend of the Lushingtons and Susan Lushington's diaries contain many references to him and his wife Annabella.

[131] For more on Blunt see E. Longford, *A Pilgrimage of Passion. The Life of Wilfred Scawen Blunt*, (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1979).

"Not yet Positivists"?

The moral and spiritual foundations of Lushington's life were laid in his early years. Although his father may not have been at the core of the Clapham Sect, there is no doubt that, after the loss of his mother when he was only five, his father with his Clapham values and ideology, became a major influence in his life. Vernon like the rest of his family, venerated the old judge, and paid heed to his wise counsel. Stephen Lushington's personal broad-mindedness on religious issues allowed his son to come to Cambridge with an open and enquiring mind. In the debating chamber of the Cambridge Union, the fireside gatherings of the Apostles, the "tobacco parliaments" of Alexander Macmillan, and, later, the various clubs and societies which he joined, Lushington began to find answers to the theological, political and scientific challenges of the mid nineteenth century. But where did this leave Lushington at the end of the eighteen fifties? Had he developed a cohesive position in anticipation of his later commitment to Positivism? Royden Harrison has written of Lushington's generation:

> In the 'fifties they were not yet Positivists, nor were they all of one mind. They were looking for a religion which would allow them to retain the moral earnestness of their evangelical forefathers without committing them to a shallow and untenable theology. They were in search of Cause, but they could recognise no political or social forces with which they felt able to identify themselves.[132]

[132] R. Harrison, *Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals 1964), p. 256.

If they were not yet Positivists in the 1850s, what were they? There is no doubt that the seeds of Positivism were not only sown but also watered and nurtured in Lushington's life during the 1850s. He had certainly discovered Comte by 1856 when his brother Godfrey wrote an article for *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* in which he called for university reforms and openness to new ideas and goes on to mention Comte as one to whom attention should be paid. After calling for Religion and Learning to be "less antagonistic", he continues:

> On the one hand, let us have no Jowett denunciations, Maurice persecutions; on the other, let no man on the score of religion refuse to listen to the historical theories of Comte, or the humanity-theories of Carlyle; or hinder Geologists from pursuing the Vestiges of Creation."[133]

Lushington could not be a "Positivist" until such times as the 1860s when there was a movement for him to join.[134] However, as Godfrey Lushington has shown, Vernon and others of his generation were already exploring the work of Comte in the mid-1850s. This may have been alongside other thinkers such as Carlyle, Ruskin and the Christian Socialists, but for Lushington, Comte was the one that would later exert the strongest influence. In the 1850s Vernon Lushington may not have been a "Positivist", but he was certainly a Positivist-in –the-making. A reference to Frederic Harrison and his contemporaries in an essay on the career of Godfrey Lushington states:

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[133] G. Lushington, "Oxford", *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* (April, 1856), pp. 234 – 257 (p. 251).

[134] In an undated letter to H.G. Seeley (written in the early 1860s) Lushington wrote, "By all means write of Comte to me, but don't be too sure of demolishing him. Understand him, if possible. My brother says you will become a fanatical positivist one day." Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97.

> But as the 1850s progressed and group retained its cohesion – with the addition of certain others such as Henry Crompton and Godfrey's twin brother, Vernon, - they definitely became Comtists or Positivists.[135]

Harrison's "Cause" was close at hand for Vernon who wrote to John Martineau:

> Party politics seem not yet quite out of the deadlock. I don't see any bright outlook myself; no prospect of a Ministry with insight and courage enough for the work to be done. Who trusts Lord Palmerston? Not I, for one, and in mere administrative ability, mere clock-work power, his government seems frail enough. All things seem to me to point to a coming revolution in the method of Parliamentary government. If all these events show anything, they show the utter hopelessness of trying to govern the country according to the old Party system. It is scarcely tolerable in times of peace, but in war and disaster and confusion? We must try something else, something better, I hope, another step nearer to the political Millennium, which even then will be far off, I trow.[136]

The "coming revolution"

Lushington foresaw a "coming revolution" but what shape would it take? Although it was to be another twenty years before he allied himself publicly with

[135] This type written manuscript was given to me some years ago. The author's name is missing although it may have been written by Eleanor Norris who signature appears at the top of the first page. Unfortunately, although this scholarly essay is referenced throughout, the pages with the references are missing. Both Godfrey and Vernon Lushington gave financial support to the emerging Positivist group in 1860s and 1870s. Jill Pellew, *Sir Godfrey Lushington*, DNB.
[136] Violet Martineau, *John Martineau,* p. 26-7

the followers of Comte, Lushington began to identify himself with the causes and matters of the day where he could apply Comtist principles and from which he would emerge as a Positivist.[137] The 1860s saw growing social permissiveness and experimentation - traits of an emerging world which were played out against a background of religious doubts. With the expansion of the workforce and the industrialisation of the land, there came the new politics of socialism. Lushington would not have advocated the sort of violence witnessed in other European countries in 1848. Positivism promised an intellectual and temporal *reorganization*, not a *revolution*. Lushington worked for change and influence from within, "not as soldiers, but as agents".[138] "Politics we must watch & from time interpose in, but the present weapon of Positivist energy is intellectual & moral action, & its true field is Opinion – Opinion in all its provinces."[139]

G.M. Young wrote, "Of all the decades in our history, a wise man would choose the eighteen-fifties to be young in."[140] By this judgement, Lushington was a fortunate man. University life opened doors for him to Christian Socialism, Carlyle and Comte. In Union debates he developed and demonstrated his political and spiritual thinking thereby establishing his place within the "generation of university radicals who emerged from the intellectual establishment".[141] They were Carlyle's "Aristocracy of Talent", united both in their affection for each other and by a resolve to make themselves felt in the world.

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[137] It was not until 1867 that the London Positivist Committee was established; before that date there was no formal organisation.
[138] Kent p. 88.
[139] Lushington , *The State*. Manuscript lecture in my possession.
[140] G.M. Young, *Victorian England. Portrait of An Age.* (OUP, 1936), p. 77.
[141] Kent, p. xi.

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The Prophet: Thomas Carlyle

This chapter and the one that follows will cover the two major influences upon the life and beliefs of Lushington. These were Thomas Carlyle, who has been described as the prophet who "brooded over the early reading of a whole generation of troubled souls",[1] and Auguste Comte, the father of sociology and creator of the priestly "Religion of Humanity".

Carlyle and Comte are usually considered to be incompatible and James Froude went as far as to claim "I, for one, was saved by Carlyle's writings from Positivism, or Romanism, or Atheism, or any of the creeds or no creeds which in those years were whirling about in Oxford like leaves in an autumn storm." [2] G.H. Lewes recalled later how, during the course of an evening he spent with Carlyle, Carlyle had scornfully commented "I looked into Comte some years ago, and soon found he was one of those creatures that bind the universe up into bundles, and sets them all in a row like stooks in a field … I was soon done with him."[3] Lushington, later in his life, called Carlyle a "moralist" who "blatantly denied and despised any attempted social science" and a "fierce mystic moralist."[4] Despite this there were, as noted in the previous chapter, some subjects such as Dictatorship and Co-operatives where Carlyle and Comte appear to have shared common ground.

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[1] Collini, p. 74.
[2] LeQuesne, p. 60.
[3] "An Evening with Thomas Carlyle", *Athenaeum*, 2 April 1887, pp. 449-50.
[4] Lushington's notes on Carlyle. In my possession.

The problem with Carlyle was that, in his essentially pragmatic approach to society, he asked questions without providing answers. It was this failure to provide answers that prompted A.H. Clough to complain to Ralph Waldo Emerson that "Carlyle led us out into the desert and he has left us there." [5] However Christopher Kent considers that Richard Congreve's first major publication in 1855 of a series of lectures on Aristotle's *Politics* demonstrated that Carlyle could, albeit unwittingly, actually prepare the ground for Comte.[6] So who is correct and were Carlyle and Comte really incompatible? Unlike Comte who set out in meticulous fashion his utopian vision for society, Carlyle died without bequeathing a philosophy because he never intended to construct one. It could be said that Comte offered a way out of the desert with his new philosophy. Comte, who died in 1857, was only known to Lushington through his published writings and through men like Congreve and, later, Frederic Harrison, both of whom had made the pilgrimage to Paris to meet their spiritual mentor. However, in Carlyle's case, Lushington not only spent time working for him, but also came to know him as a friend, earning the great man's gratitude and respect as well as a warm welcome to the fireside at Cheyne Walk.[7] Following Kent's statement that Congreve had demonstrated how Carlyle had prepared the ground for Comte, and given the chronological impact of the two men's thinking upon him, it is the relationship of Lushington and Carlyle that will be considered first.

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[5] *Emerson-Clough* Letters, ed. Howard F. Lowry and Ralph Leslie Rusk. (New York, 1968) p. vii. Froude's fictitious young clergyman Markham Sutherland cries out "Carlyle! Carlyle only raises the questions he cannot answer, and seems best contented if he can make the rest of us as discontented as himself." J.A. Froude, *The Nemesis of Faith* (John Chapman, 1849), p. 35.

[6] Kent, p.57.

[7] Fifteen letters from Carlyle to Lushington are now in the National Library of Scotland (M.S. 23167).

Today Carlyle is probably more read about than read. However, in the nineteenth century he stood at the heart of Victorian intellectual life and no serious thinker could afford to ignore his work. Carlyle's ideas may have been disputed and sometimes abhorred but, nonetheless, they needed to be engaged. For the young men of the 1840s, Carlyle was placed first in the Pantheon of great minds. Walter Besant, a contemporary of Lushington, claimed of his college friends that whilst "First and foremost, we worshipped Carlyle", F.D. Maurice was their second greatest literary hero, with Charles Kingsley, Charles Dickens and Alfred Tennyson sharing third place. [8] Frederic Harrison who, despite his personal contention that Carlyle's life was a tragedy of unbelief, wrote that "in the period which separates the era of Bentham from the era of Darwin, his was the most potent and ennobling influence."[9]

What was it about Carlyle that led to his veneration? He was in many ways a strange mixture, radical in his politics, but a firm believer in authority. Sometimes, such as in his essay "The Nigger Question", he appears repugnant. Although Carlyle was distrusted by those of the clergy who might have followed him in modernizing the doctrines of Christianity, he did believe in moral as opposed to material progress and consequently derided, denied, and distrusted science. As history has shown, each new rising generation seeks a cause, a rallying point and a spokesman. For Lushington and his contemporaries, Carlyle's radical deliberations and his authoritative and prophetic communication came at an opportune time when the ideologies of the previous generation were

[8] Walter Besant, *Autobiography of Sir Walter Besant*, London, 1902, p. 86.
[9] Frederic Harrison, "Froude's Life of Carlyle" in the North American Review, January 1885, reprinted in *The Choice of Books*, (Macmillan, 1886).

being tried and found wanting. His religious sounding rhetoric made a strong impression on his disciples when the voice of revolution was being heard all over Europe in the late 1840s. Above all Carlyle, although offering no solutions, did champion effort, truthfulness and moral courage.

Such was Lushington's regard for Carlyle that he wrote to his fiancée, shortly before their wedding in 1865, suggesting that they take "a volume of Carlyle with us on our wedding trip … and I will read some to you; that shall make your heart burn within you, or I shall be sorry!"[10] This seems to have had the desired results and, some years later, Jane Lushington wrote to her husband that she was "on the sofa reading & as far as my pains wld let me – greatly enjoying the Life of Carlyle – poor fellow – 'a fellow feeling' – with his sufferings makes me see that all his short comings were the direct result of bodily suffering & what a glorious creature he was mentally – immeasurably superior to Irving – with all his charms – tho' he too might have been otherwise but for trials."[11]

"Old memories and tottering beliefs"

Was it earnest enquiry that produced the crisis of faith or was it the new ideas and discoveries of their age that were emerging that made young men into earnest enquirers? The answer is probably the latter. The crisis of faith has been

[10] SHC7857/Box3/1. The Lushingtons' choice of honeymoon reading was not unusual. Sidney and Beatrice Webb spent their honeymoon reading about the history of the co-operative movement and Samuel Haddon, founder of Toynbee Hall, and his wife Caroline chose to read F.D. Maurice's lectures on St. Paul's Epistles on their honeymoon.
[11] Jane to Vernon Lushington, postmarked June 1883. SHC7857/Box2/7. "Irving" was Edward Irving the celebrated preacher who was a close friend of Carlyle.

considered in general terms in the preceding chapter. F.M. Turner raises some interesting questions as to whether the crisis was such a straightforward matter as has been assumed. He argues that it should no longer be regarded as "the inevitable and virtually self-explanatory result of progressive historical and scientific knowledge." Rather it is as much related to "the private context of the family which for many evangelicals, far more than the Church, constituted the centre of Christian values."[12]

Did Lushington personally experience such a crisis and what was his approach to the religious turmoil of his age? As it is doubtful that Lushington ever possessed a conventional religious faith any notion of him experiencing a "crisis of faith" is misleading. In a letter written in 1854 to Joanna Richardson, Lushington appears to still regard himself as a Christian. However, it was clear that his meaning of the word by then differed from accepted concepts. In this letter, which refers to a visit Lushington had made to his uncle Sir Culling Eardley, a noted evangelical and social reformer, Lushington wrote "Sir C.E. & I agree very well [on social concern] – though our religious opinions are as wide apart as those of common Xtians well can be."[13]

The very word *crisis* implies a sudden and dramatic experience. Lushington had enjoyed a liberal, latitudinarian, upbringing which provided him with the freedom to develop his own belief system. Lushington experienced a growing awareness that traditional and childhood beliefs were no longer able to provide

[12] F.M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority. Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (CUP, 1993).
[13] NLS MS.3990, ff. 177-180.

satisfactory answers to the questions exercising his mind at the time.[14] Like Matthew Arnold, it seems that Lushington "slid out of belief in orthodox Christianity at an early age without experiencing any great emotional turmoil".[15] Lushington's twin brother Godfrey, with whom he shared more than just the same physical appearance, wrote of experiencing what he called "religious difficulties" in 1856[16], and Vernon himself, as has been seen, had written to his fiancée on the eve of their wedding in the same year reminding her that he held unconventional views on religious matters which might require being made public on some future occasion.[17]

Although the crisis of faith might be said to have been instigated by the publication of various works of biblical criticism it was later fuelled by the discoveries of Charles Darwin. A famous debate concerning evolution took place in Oxford under the aegis of the British Association in June 1860. Vernon and Godfrey Lushington were in Oxford at this time where they were joined by Arthur Munby who has left a graphic description of his visit and his conversations with them and others friends including James Clerk Maxwell and Richard Litchfield. Together the group attended the University sermon, preached by Frederick Temple, later Archbishop of Canterbury, "on the old theme – science v. revelation." On returning to Godfrey's rooms, the group started to

[14] Lushington's experience is likely to have been similar to that of Frederic Harrison who, looking back in 1906, wrote "As the supernatural died out of my view the natural took its place. The change was so gradual, and the growth of one phase out of another was with me so perfectly regular, that I have never been able to fix any definite period of change, now indeed have I ever been conscious of any real change at all". *Memories and Thoughts: Men-Book-Cities-Art* London.
[15] Stefan Collini, *Arnold* (Oxford University Press - Pastmasters, 1988), p. 20.
[16] Bodleian MS Eng. Misc C349 f. 99.
[17] SHC 7857/Box3/1

discuss the sermon with Godfrey exclaiming "We go to hear a great divine … and we come away misdoubting worse than ever!" [18] Discussion then turned to T.H. Huxley's response to the Bishop of Oxford at the British Association the previous day when, challenged by the Bishop whether he would not rather have for his father a man than ape, he replied fiercely that, having to choose between a genuine ape, and a man of abilities whose used his talents for the purposes of evil, he would prefer the ape. Both the Lushington twins and Litchfield were clearly on the side of the evolutionists but Munby privately confided in his diary: "I must and will have a Father in heaven, and a Christ too, if I have to create them out of old memories and tottering beliefs." [19]

This episode, as recorded by Munby, provides a valuable addition to our understanding of some of the great issues of the day that were facing men like Lushington. It illustrates what Edward Caird described as "a world of eclipse and paralysis, neither able to find a faith, nor to do without one" [20]and is also reminiscent of Comte's diagnosis of the culture's ills – a world in discord with itself. Furthermore Munby provides one of the few authentic first-hand versions of what Huxley actually said to the Bishop of Oxford. Munby's record of discussion after the lecture provides evidence of how far the Lushington twins had progressed in their thinking on evolution by this time. Unlike the Lushingtons, Munby was so desperate to maintain orthodox theology that he would, if necessary, go so far as to create one out of a belief system that had been proved wanting. Despite Lushington being one of Munby's closest friends (and

[18] A.J. Munby Diaries, Volume 5, Sunday 1 July 1860. Trinity College Library.
[19] ibid
[20] E. Caird, *Essays*, 1:191, pp. 194-5.

one of only three in whom he confided the knowledge of his marriage to the maid of all work Hannah Cullwick[21]) Munby was never able to share his views and take up Positivism.

Carlyle's biographer J.A. Froude graphically described the spiritual turmoil of this generation as having a "want of instruction and light in the mirk midnight of human affairs" which "for eighteen hundred years there had not been."[22] However, Lushington was already finding both "instruction and light"- first in Thomas Carlyle and then in Auguste Comte. It was these men who, above all others were to indelibly stamp and shape his future life. Comte, the high priest of the religion of humanity, was Lushington's "light in a dark world" and Carlyle, the prophet, was his "lamp for the New Years".[23] Lushington's difficulties were, as for his contemporaries, of an intellectual nature and related to dogma, creeds and the accuracy and authority of the Bible rather than to belief in spiritual values. Leslie Stephen believed that the crisis of faith was as much a crisis of the intellect and that to read Carlyle "with appreciation" would induce such a crisis, the experience of which was akin to a religious conversion.[24]

One particular area related to the crisis of faith was that of the Bible and on this subject we can hear direct from Lushington through the notes he made for a

[21] D. Hudson, *Munby, Man of Two Worlds*, (John Murray 1972), p. 435.
[22] J.A. Froude, *Thomas Carlyle: A History of the First Forty Years of His Life*, London, (1882).
[23] "A Lamp for the New Years" was Lushington's title to the final part of an essay on Carlyle which he wrote for the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine. "A Light in a dark world" is the way he described Comte when writing to H.G. Seeley in 1863.
[24] Quoted in Annan, *Leslie Stephen*, p. 307.

lecture to the London Positivist Society.[25] Unbelievers encountered in the Bible moral and intellectual difficulties that "transformed the greatest book of all evangelical and Christian texts into a dangerous book leading to doubt and scepticism rather than to faith and belief." [26] In his lecture Lushington stated that he considered the Bible to be far from perfect and that it held no "special privilege". He openly questioned the inspiration of the scriptures considering them to have come from "the hand & mind & heart of man." Whilst honouring the Bible as a book of history and literature, it had "imperfections". Dramatically, he goes further by saying that the Bible possesses "proved dangerous qualities". Those dangers lay initially in the account of the Fall which he believed to be "topsy turvy". Instead of man having declined from a supremely high estate, he had actually risen from "a brutish one." This reflected both the discoveries of Charles Darwin and the Comtist's view of mankind.[27]

In these notes, probably written in the early 1880s, Lushington was only sharing what an increasingly large number of his fellow intellectuals were expressing. Lushington's ideas may have been fermenting and evolving in his mind since the 1860s and, that being so he may have felt obliged to refrain from public expression until after his father's death. Certainly by 1860, in a letter to Joanna Richardson, Lushington, writing of the person of Jesus pointedly added "whom I

[25] Manuscript notes in my possession.
[26] F.M. Turner, "The Victorian Crisis of Faith and the Faith That was Lost", in *Victorian Faith in Crisis. Essays on Continuity and Change in Nineteenth-Century Religious Belief*, Stanford University Press (1990), p.16.
[27] A sale of books formerly in the possession of Vernon Lushington in 1930 included a first edition of Darwin's *The Descent of Man* (1871) personally inscribed to Lushington from Darwin. *Catalogue of Printed Books and a Few Manuscripts Comprising The Property of Miss Susan Lushington &Ors*. (24 to 27 February, 1930).

oftenest think of as man."[28] Such a view casting doubt on the divinity of Christ, if expressed publicly, could have resulted in serious embarrassment to Stephen Lushington who held an important position as an ecclesiastical judge.[29]

A Just War and "A Holy Duty"

Lushington discovered Carlyle when he was at Cambridge and still at a deeply impressionable period of his life. Carlyle's effect upon him was both immediate and deep, and resulted in an important series of articles he wrote on Carlyle for the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* in 1856. Before considering those essays however, we should turn to a little known essay by Lushington which appeared the previous year. In 1855, stirred to action by the Crimean War, Lushington wrote and published, *How Shall The Strong Man Use His Strength?* in which he both defended and justified Britain's action against Russia.

Lushington's essay was written in the context of the intense nationalistic fever that gripped Britain in 1854. Many, who like Lushington were pacifists at heart,

[28] Lushington to Joanna Richardson, 4 March 1860, NLS MS.3990, ff.319-323.

[29] Stephen Lushington's judgements in several leading cases expressed the view that the Articles must be construed "by their plain and grammatical meaning". Lushington was the judge at the trial of H.B. Wilson, the editor of *Essays and Reviews*, when Wilson was sentenced to one year's suspension, a judgement that was later overturned. On October 19 1861 Stephen wrote to his sister Alice, "These Essays & Reviews are horrible – a fresh prosecution this morning of Mr Wilson." On January 16 of the following year Stephen wrote to Alice, "The argument in Essays & Reviews is concluded having occupied nearly 10 days. The Counsel very handsomely returned thanks to me for my so patiently hearing the case. This is consoling but alas my trials now commence for I have to write my judgement." It seems that Lushington had some sympathy with the writers of *Essays and Reviews*, especially given his own latitudinarianism and his friendship with Benjamin Jowett, who frequently stayed with the Lushingtons both before and after the trial and F.D. Maurice, wrote to Macmillan's Magazine regretting that Lushington had not followed his own "lay instincts" which would have favoured acquittal. However, Lushington had to take an objective stance his role being that of a lawyer and not a theologian. The church historian Owen Chadwick considered that Lushington's judgement "posed the problem of the modern church in a stark form."

favoured the war even though it entailed two Christian countries forming an alliance with a Muslim one in an action against another Christian country. Russia's reactionary policies in 1849 had not been forgotten. The Government was offering commissions to undergraduates to replace the terrible losses in the war, and such was the enthusiasm of Lushington's friend Edward Burne-Jones for the war that it led him to exclaim that he "wanted very much to go and get killed."[30] There is no evidence that Lushington ever considered offering himself for active service although his naval training would have well qualified him. Instead he chose to use his legal knowledge to write an essay fully justifying the British response.

Lushington's *How Shall The Strong Man Use His Strength* is infused with a strong sense of justice and Britain's role in the world. It blends a strong diatribe on Russia with a patriotic call to Britain to take up her role a defender of the weak. In contrast to Tennyson's poem "The Charge of the Light Brigade" which later savagely critiqued the establishment – "someone had blundered", Lushington's blind belief in justice was an impassioned defence of the war. Lushington introduces his essay by explaining that it was written in response to a statement on the House of Commons made by Lord Stanley on the 25th May 1855. Stanley closed a lengthy speech questioning the Government's policy on the war with the following words:

[30] P. Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones*, (Michael Joseph Ltd., 1975), p.22.

> A year will not pass before the country with one voice will ask, 'Tell us what we are fighting for; - tell us, if we are victorious, what will be the results of victory; tell us what recompense we may expect, except mere barren wreaths of glory, for the sacrifice of uncounted treasure, and mourning and misery entailed upon a hundred thousand English homes![31]

Lushington carefully argues how, using the general principles of international law, this was a just war. He claimed that his essay would show:

> how it can rightly come to pass that Christian and free England is fighting for a Mahommedan (sic) nation, and one despotically governed; that England, too, is allied with a nation whose ruler men call a usurper stained with crime: for this reason, namely, that justice is due to all nations, and is the duty of all nations, irrespectively of any form of religion or government, or even character, so that, in rendering or accepting aid, we do not lend ourselves to national wrong.[32]

Contrary to Tennyson's questioning of the loss of life, Lushington argues that, "the work of International Justice yet remains to be done, Heaven knows with how much blood-shedding and national disaster … England must take her share in it or perish."[33] Then with the full force of biblical allusion, and echoing Carlyle's belief that a just war required a just leader whose morality is greater

[31] V. Lushington, *How Shall The Strong Man Use His Strength? or, The Right and Duty of War with application to the present crisis.* (Bell and Daldy, 186, Fleet Street, 1855), p. 3. Lushington must have written his pamphlet in June or July as he refers to Stanley's speech of "a month ago."
[32] Ibid., p. 89.
[33] Ibid., p. 55.

than his opponent's, Lushington cries out, "He that doth justice, justice shall be done him to!"[34] .

Lushington's friends were later to recall him as one who chose wherever possible to avoid controversy and, instead, to try and mediate for peaceful outcomes. This is particularly found in his response to the development of British imperialistic attitude to South Africa at the end of the nineteenth century. Lushington's other mentor, Auguste Comte, believed war to be a corollary of 'theologism' but acceptable during what he termed 'the Transitional Stage'. In the final Positivist era war would be eliminated and the energies that had supported it diverted into industry.[35] One person who did not agree with Lushington was his positivist colleague Frederic Harrison who totally opposed the Crimean war.[36] Harrison was increasingly coming under the influence of Auguste Comte whom he had visited in Paris in the summer of 1855. It seems clear that Lushington at this time had not progressed as far Harrison in embracing Comte. Given all this, Lushington's essay appears to be greatly out of character and reflects his misinterpretation of what Carlyle actually believed. However this raises the question of what did Carlyle really believe both about the Crimean War and war in general? Carlyle's popular image has sometimes been that of a war-monger. However this reputation was been called into question by D.J. Trela who has made a strong argument that Carlyle's theory of the hero whereby "The power of the Hero is automatically just, even if it be used for conquest", has been misunderstood and trivialised by his critics. Trela believes that statements such

[34] Ibid., p. 55.
[35] Auguste Comte, *Polity, iii,* pp.51-4.
[36] Frederic Harrison, *Autobiographic Memoirs*, Vol. I, (London, Macmillan, 1911), p. 163.

as that in “Shooting Niagara” wherein Carlyle “lamented that men in every day life could not be ‘compelled’ or ordered about, as military subalterns” have been misunderstood and that the meaning of his statements about war is "not as self-evident as his critics suppose.”[37]

Did Lushington therefore also wrongly interpret Carlyle’s views on war? In one sense Lushington was, like many others, taking Carlyle at face value on the question of war. Carlyle had notably expressed in his *Cromwell*, that war was a lamentably bloody, yet necessary event. However it was not gratuitous bloodshed that he advocated but war when used as purposeful reform and advance on previous chaos. On the face of it this was exactly what Lushington saw Britain’s role to be in the Crimea. As far as Lushington was concerned Russia was “a usurper stained with crime”. Carlyle had written of “a matter of justice and wisdom wrestling with lawlessness and ignorance, of a noble cause fighting an inferior one.” Lushington believed that Britain held what almost amounted to a divinely appointed role in which she must attack Russia not because British interests were threatened but because a weaker nation had come under attack. However this is where he appears to have parted company with Carlyle who considered such a war should not be undertaken by one nation unless it was that nation that was attacked. Indeed, in the spring of that year, Carlyle had written in his Journal, “Really, I would wait till Russia meddled with me before I drew sword to his increase of strength.” In May 1855 Carlyle had written to Ruskin, “My Prussian affairs [his “Fredrick”] are as bad almost as Balaklava; and indeed

[37] D.J. Trela, *Carlyle, The Just War and the Crimean War*, Carlyle Newsletter No. 9, 1988.

resemble that notable Enterprise of the Turk War in several respects,—in this especially, that I had no business at all to concern myself in such an adventure, with such associates; and that a good result to it does not seem (for most part) so much as possible!" [38]

In a brief, unpublished, manuscript, dated 23 March 1855, Carlyle lamented the human destruction and military failure of the Crimean War, linking it directly to a failure of government leadership. In addition a reading of Carlyle's private correspondence from the period reveals that he was deeply appalled by the war and the resultant suffering. [39] When later editing his wife's letters he found one which particularly expressed her concern for the suffering created by the war and wrote as a footnote "Thrice stupid, hideous blotch of a 'Crimean War', so called."[40] Trela writes that Carlyle believed that peaceful, positive change was always preferable, but frequently impossible.

Lushington, filled with youthful enthusiasm and a deep sense of injustice, appears to have taken Carlyle at face value and, like others, wrongly interpreted his mind. In the light of Lushington's later adulation of Carlyle, which found expression in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine essays the following year, it is inconceivable that he should have sought deliberately to express a view

[38] Carlyle, Thomas, and Jane Welsh Carlyle. *The Carlyle Letters Online (CLO)*. Coordinating Ed. Brent E. Kinser. Durham, NC: Duke UP, 2007, Web. 15 Nov. 2008.
[39] 10 December 1854, Carlyle to James Marshall, "Neither have I the happiness to sympathise with my countrymen in this magnificent Turk was they have got into, and are all talking about. On the contrary I reckon it one of the maddest wars lately heard of: undertaken with immense enthusiasm of all the noisy, unwise classes and with all the quiet and wise indifference to it, or dead against it." *The Carlyle Letters Online*.
[40] *The Carlyle Letters Online*.

opposite to that of Carlyle. Lushington's essay on the Crimean War was, of course, written before his work for Carlyle which would have provided him with the benefit of discussing such matters directly. Whatever the case, Lushington's argument is indeed one that right is might and that Britain and her allies had the moral high ground.[41] In Carlyle's words it was a "noble cause fighting an inferior one." The idea of Carlyle's phrase "Might is Right" was later taken up by Lushington in the opening chapter of his essay on Carlyle in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*:

> Might is taken by Carlyle to mean any force of whatsoever kind, resident in things or men, certainly including the highest kind of force; and Right he uses in its true and, proper sense, a something ordained (*rectum),* not an independent privilege by any means, for Carlyle denies any such at all to exist, but either a duty, or its reciprocal, a due, prescribed; - which may often be far from a pleasure to either party, as for instance, killing and being killed. And by the phrase, might is right, must not be understood, Might makes Right … but rather that Might and Right are interchangeable terms, because everlastingly, and in every case, co-existent. Indeed, to speak plainly at once the very heart of the matter, this proposition of Carlyle's Might is Right, is founded in his belief that God

[41] Despite Lushington's apparent belligerent attitude to the war, a more humane side of his nature is revealed in an undated letter (probably Advent 1854) from Lushington to Joanna Richardson in which he writes, "Our last news from the War – that slaughter of our Cavalry was distressing – but I hope we shall soon hear of Sebastopol being taken - & then horrors may cease for a while." NLS MS.3990, ff. 177-80.

> is the maker of all, that He makes and gives nothing in vain, but to every gift of power assigns an exactly corresponding duty or right.[42]

Lushington stresses that Might does not mean brute force but rather the Might of the Intellect and for him the British action in the Crimea was more than a just war it was also "a holy duty".[43] Lushington returns to the subject of "Might is Right" in a later chapter of his essay on Carlyle and states "It is important to insist upon the Law of 'Might is Right' applying to many acts that at first sight seem acts of brute force only." It is to be regretted that no record exists of what Carlyle thought of Lushington's essay - if he ever read it.

Carlyle – "A Lamp for the New Years"

Whatever understanding, or misunderstanding of Carlyle lay behind 'How Shall The Strong Man Use His Strength?' Lushington's absolute and unqualified endorsement of what he believed Carlyle to be saying was demonstrated a year later in his essay in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. Lushington's essays appeared at an interesting time in Carlyle's life and work. There is a strong case for arguing that Carlyle was in his zenith as the prophet par-excellence in the 1840s. With the appearance of his *Latter Day Pamphlets* in 1850, particularly his *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question*, Carlyle began to alienate many of his early disciples. It is therefore of interest that it should be shortly after this

[42] Lushington, *Carlyle*, p. 198.
[43] The radicals were divided over the war. Cobden was deeply opposed but W.E. Forster, like Lushington, saw it as "a righteous cause". Harvie, *The Lights of Liberalism* p. 102 and T. Wemyss Reid, *Life of the Right Hon. W.E. Foster* (Chapman & Hall, London), Vol. 1, p.p. 301-2.

time that Lushington had his epiphany moment as far as Carlyle is concerned. The fact that Lushington's essay is one of the earliest critical appreciations of Carlyle and his writings, written during his lifetime, adds to its importance.

It is possible that Lushington first met Carlyle in 1853. Charles Brookfield recorded that on the 22 April of that year he made a visit to Lord and Lady Ashburton at their London home, Bath House, where he found a large party that included "[George] Venables, [Richard] Ellice, Mr & Mrs Carlyle, [James] Spedding, [Richard Monkton] Milnes, [and] Lushington." Although the Lushington referred to by Brookfield is not more positively identified, it may well have been Vernon – who had developed a close friendship with Monckton Milnes at Cambridge. [44] However, it was not until late in 1856, and after the publication of Lushington's essay on Carlyle in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*, that Lushington wrote to Carlyle offering his services as an unpaid secretary and assistant editor.

On 5 December 1856 Carlyle replied to Lushington, "Your offer is very loyal and generous; - and I do not think unlikely to be accepted."[45] Carlyle then adds that he already had help, "but your minute acquaintance with the affair is a great temptation." At this time Carlyle was in the process of revising his earlier works for Chapman & Hall's cheap edition with the assistance of the barrister

[44] On 28 March 1867 Jane Lushington wrote to her husband that she had called on the Brookfields. SHC 7854/1/3.
[45] NLS 23167.98

Alexander Gilchrist who had "been called into the country for a week".[46] Carlyle continues that, "every moment … is taken up with another, much more dreadful Enterprise." Carlyle's "Enterprise" was his epic biography of Frederick the Great whose writing occupied him from 1852 to 1865. In short, Carlyle took Lushington up on his offer, and a few days later, Carlyle sent a letter along with a copy of the third volume of the uniform edition, annotated with possible amendments and additions to the text for consideration.[47]

Two weeks later, on 19 December, Carlyle wrote again to Lushington, "I have gone over the First Volume, under your guidance, and fancy it now ready for the Printer."[48] The following month Carlyle wrote to Edward Chapman requesting him to send both the first and second volumes of *The French Revolution* to, amongst others, Lushington – "following that, monthly, by the others volumes as they come out."[49] In April 1857 Carlyle wrote to Lushington concerning his revisions to *Cromwell* and praising his work as being "as lucid and succinct as the best practical intelligence cd make it."[50] The following month Carlyle wrote to Joseph Neuberg, another of his assistants, describing Lushington as "your fellow-labourer in the *Summary & Index*, who is a very pleasant intelligent man."[51] These and the other letters from Carlyle show that Lushington played an important, and perhaps unrecognised, role in the editing of Carlyle's works. In

[46] Alexander Gilchrist, whose brother had died from drowning, is best remembered for his biography of William Blake.
[47] NLS 23167.94
[48] NLS 23167.98
[49] Carlyle to Edward Chapman, 26 January 1857. *The Carlyle Letters on Line*. Carlyle's *French Revolution* was required reading in advanced university circles and probably added some weight to Comte's explanation of the cosmic significance of that event.
[50] NLS 23167.118
[51] Carlyle to Joseph Neuberg, 13 May 1857. *The Carlyle Letters on Line*.

addition Lushington came to Carlyle when he was in the process of writing the monumental *History of Frederick the Great* which he had started in 1853. The first two volumes of *Frederick* were published in June 1858 thereby committing Carlyle irrevocably to a huge publishing project. Clearly the assistance of Lushington at this prolific stage of Carlyle's life would have been invaluable.[52]

It was about the same time that Lushington started his work for Carlyle that he was provided with an opportunity to share his enthusiasm for him with a much wider circle. In 1856 William Morris, Edward Burne-Jones, and the rest of "The Set", which by then included the Lushington twins, founded a new publication called *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* to disseminate their own beliefs and views on various literary and artistic matters. *The Magazine* was seen as a successor to *The Germ*, a short lived, but important, periodical of the original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Lushington's chief contribution to the magazine was a series of five critical assessments of Carlyle who, at the outset he stated to be "A Great Man born to be a Guide to British Men".[53]

Lushington's adulatory critique in *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* summed up the major themes of Carlyle's thought and in doing so he found it

[52] K.J. Fielding was the first to recognise the importance of this collection of letters from Carlyle to Lushington which were acquired by the National Library of Scotland when they were sold out of the family archive. Fielding considered that Lushington's role as Carlyle's secretary was far more important than had previously been given credence. He wrote that "the credit for what he did in editing Carlyle has been appropriated by Henry Larkin." Larkin was another of Carlyle's secretaries and, in an undated letter to H.G. Seeley, Lushington wrote praising Larkin "who has done good service to Carlyle, & has hold of him by his tail to the end of time." Until Fielding published his paper the only other acknowledgement of Lushington's work for Carlyle was a note at the end of Frederic Harrison's obituary of him in *The Positivist Review*, April 1912, which stated that the index to Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* had been compiled by Lushington. "Vernon Lushington: Carlyle's Friend and Editor", *Carlyle Society Newsletter No. 8*, 1987, pp. 7-18.

[53] These neglected essays were recognised in 2005 for their importance to scholars both of Carlyle and the Pre-Raphaelite movement, by Marcia Ward in her *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth Century Realism*, (CUP, 2000).

necessary to defend some of Carlyle's more controversial ideas. Lushington's essays however, are more than a commentary on Carlyle. They are also his personal reflection upon Carlyle and his religion, his work, his writing and his role as the prophet par excellence of the nineteenth century. More importantly for this study, in the essays, which received the warm praise of Rossetti,[54] we are able to hear from Lushington himself as he expounds his own beliefs and philosophy at this stage of his development just a few years after leaving Cambridge. Carlyle appears to have read the Magazine with some amusement, writing to his brother John, "I send you a poor *Oxford & Cambridge* Magazine, wh. came this morning. If you have anything weighty to do or read, you will not get much good of that! In fact it is chiefly worth looking at in the prophetic way; as an indication of the sense and nonsense working in the heads of these young fellows, which will be Legislators &c in a few years, and endeavouring to execute what they think."[55] It is perhaps difficult to anticipate the closeness of the Lushington/Carlyle relationship from this rather dismissive assessment.

Lushington's paper was published in five parts, each of which formed an essay dealing with a different aspect of Carlyle, his message and his work. In introducing the first article entitled "His 'I believe'",[56] in the April edition of the magazine, Lushington makes it clear that "the following pages are written by one who "believes" in Carlyle. He continues, "This is for the benefit of the reader,

[54] In a letter to William Allingham, Rossetti wrote, "Do you not think Vernon Lushington's *Carlyle* very good in the *O and C Mag*? His things and his brother's, Morris's, and one or two by Jones … are the staple of that magazine." D.G. Rossetti, *Letters* I, p. 312.
[55] 7 May 1856, Thomas Carlyle to John A. Carlyle. Carlyle Letters Online.
[56] Lushington's first chapter preceded the well known, and highly favourable, review of John Ruskin's *Modern Painters* Volume III by Burne-Jones.

who is invited thereby to skip or to read. (I would rather you read please!)". He continues, "I intend, on this occasion, to introduce the reader to Carlyle – is it their first meeting, or not their first? – by some words of his, which once did the like office for another young Englishman." Here Lushington interestingly adopts the device used by Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* when the author uses the guise of Teufelsdrockh to communicate his own views. Lushington is clearly the "young Englishman" of whom he writes in the following section.

> The incident to be spoken of is a trivial one, important chiefly to one person only; yet let it be scorned; for great or little, it is a true event in human history, helping to make up the sum total of good and evil now in the world; and besides, it is useful for our present purpose. A year or two ago, then, early one morning, at Cambridge, the young Englishman, an undergraduate, 'all in his gown so blue,' strolled into a friend's rooms at College; found him gone out; but on the table lay a book, Heroes and Hero Worship! He opened it and read as follows: 'It is well said, in every sense, that a man's Religion is the chief fact with regard to him."…These few sentences made a deep impression on our friend; they set him reading Carlyle in deep earnest, and have kept him doing so; - and now not content with reading, he must needs be writing too! But forgetting him and his destinies, let us, you and I, reader, ponder these words, for they furnish a fit starting point for our present enterprise. They are true words, profoundly true; at once a help and a warning for our judgement of all human work and character, but especially a clue to discover what we

> desire to learn respecting him who wrote these very words out of his own heart. [57]

The essay implies that Lushington had not read Carlyle before this time. Perhaps the young Lushington was not ready at that time to come under the spell of the prophet of Cheyne Row. However in setting out his discovery of Carlyle, Lushington here adopts a prose style remarkably similar to his model. Under the heading "What is Carlyle's Religion? What is his chief belief respecting the Universe?" Lushington investigates Carlyle's religion, defending him from charges of Deism and Pantheism. In answering the question set out in the title to this chapter Lushington immediately answers with "Know then, reader, the true answer to be this, That there is an Eternal living God who owns and rules the world. Strange that this belief should be predicated as characteristic of Carlyle! For it would seem to be the necessary faith of all reasonable men, and so in truth partially it is and must be; yet, in no other writer of this generation, who has dealt with things Secular, that is, with the breadth and entireness and every-day and all-day of human life, and not the Sunday section of it only, is this thought, I think, so sure, so abiding, so paramount." Lushington then corrects what he considers to be a misconception about Carlyle and, at the same time, discloses his own thoughts. He writes:

> It is often said that Carlyle believes in a great overruling Power, but not a Personal Deity. But this notion of the poor public arises, partly because

[57] Lushington, *Carlyle*, pp. 193-4.

> he avoids all discussion of religion as stated in formal propositions, regarding it as a living truth, which can be discovered not by logic, but only by spiritual insight; he therefore never tries to prove the existence of Deity, but always takes it for granted, as the foundation of all thought, and of thinking power; and partly it arises, because he adopts phraseology different from the common, sometimes out of mere waywardness or the force of habit, but more often from the impulse of genius, to choose its own form of expression; and the deep conviction, that truths, even the greatest, dressed in their old uniforms are for the most part disregarded as every-day presences, not worth thinking about, or only at appointed times, church levees and the like, when they strut and bustle about officially. Yet, for all this, he is sometimes the simplest of the simple in phrase, uttering the greatest truths, just like his friend Mahomet, 'There is but one God, - God is great!' It would be well for our scribes and Pharisees to know that.[58]

Here Lushington defends Carlyle from charges of Deism and Pantheism and goes on to argue that he sought for "Order, Subordination, above all of Unity." Carlyle had been raised as a Calvinist, and although he for a long time been unsure of his faith, he retained a certain belief in a Supreme Power. Lushington's own religious views were similar. He appears to have still held to the belief in some sort of impersonal deity but he could not believe in any sense of a personal God or accept the literal truth of the bible and the doctrines of the Christian church

[58] Ibid., p. 195.

Having dealt with the crucial issue of Carlyle's religious beliefs - his "Faith" - Lushington turns in the next two essays, published in May and June, to deal with Carlyle's "Work". This he does under the headings "His Lamp for the Old Years" and "Another Look at 'The Lamp for the Old Years". Lushington writes:

> To begin with, Life is no firework display; but a long, long struggle, demanding the energies of the whole man; not lightning resolve only, and death-defying valour, and brilliant noisy qualities; but far more the silent qualities, patient abiding purpose, calm strength, and all manner of quiet endurance, quiet endeavour, which leave record of themselves chiefly, often entirely, in their effects. Victory is indeed appointed to good men, but seldom such as the world can shout for in the hero's ears; seldom even such as the good man can himself see (has he not to live by faith?); and always it must be won by Suffering.[59]

In listing the "silent qualities" which he admired so much in Carlyle, Lushington could well have been writing of himself for these were the very characteristics that others observed in him. Lushington writes that "The sum of all this is that Carlyle judges Men by what they have really believed, and what they have really done. Spiritual Beliefs, or what we call Religions, have been many, and to all Carlyle will do justice. In every case he will seek the substance underlying the

[59] Lushington, *Carlyle*, p. 344.

form".[60] Lushington believed that the highest truth was to recognise God in all things, especially in human relationships.

Lushington then turns to the Bible as he attempts to correct what he believes to have been another misconception about Carlyle. Here Lushington again adopts Carlyle's style and methodology of using rhetorical questions and large gestures. He relies on biblical expressiveness rather than its theology with which, by this time, he was struggling:

> And yet one word more; Carlyle, it is said, does not love men. I can only call this a foolish, miserable error. How can we say it of one who has spent a life in the loving portraiture of men, especially in the honouring of Greatest and Best? How can we say it of one, who, as it remains to tell, has laboured much, and earnestly to reclaim us, our English Nation, from evil miserable courses, and to guide us into the ways of righteousness, which alone are ways of blessedness? 'O Jerusalem! Jerusalem! Thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee!' – A sad, sad thought, on which I will not dwell, for now to me this Article is a thing of the Past.[61]

In November Lushington turned to the subject of "Carlyle as a Writer", a subject on which Lushington was well qualified to comment given his role as Carlyle's secretary. Lushington again adopts the language of *Sartor Resartus* when he

[60] Ibid., p. 350.
[61] Ibid., p. 352.

describes Carlyle's writings as "the dress which his thoughts wear is very curious, and in many particulars has been cut out and stitched together by himself".[62] Although Lushington uses this chapter to praise Carlyle's authoritative tone and style, he is also somewhat critical of Carlyle's later writings and accuses him of "coarse and unworthy banter." Of the *Latter Day Pamphlets* Lushington is critical, writing that "After making every allowance which our unceasing love and reverence for the writer constraints, we cannot say that the Latter Day Pamphlets are conceived in this spirit; and consequently … we cannot altogether love them". Lushington goes on to accuse Carlyle of losing his temper and comments that there is "far too much bawling, gesticulation, and execration."[63]

The final part of Lushington's essay was published in December 1856 with the title "His Lamp for the New Years". In this article Lushington triumphantly sets out Carlyle's prophetic role within the nation. He writes of Carlyle,

> For the most true, the most complete view to take of him is this. A Great Man born in these years in Britain to be a Guide to British Men. Behind him lies the citadel of Unbelief, stormed in his youth – the citadel which wore away the souls of so many heroes with long hopeless strivings: now he heads his fellow-countrymen, and seeks to lead them Home – through many strange cities; over tempestuous seas of thought – to old forgotten Truth, to ancient Worth……It is indeed hard to realise even the

[62] Ibid., p. 698.
[63] Ibid., p. 712

> possibility of such a man being amongst us. He wears no crown, does not 'walk abroad in yellow Drury-Lane stage-boots and address us in blank verse;' has not even a pulpit to speak from, or an office to date from: is a plain individual, dwelling in a corner of London, and writing books, - apparently for the book-market; to many only a Name, to most not even that. The simple truth is enough to those who know what is the value of wise words. He is a Writer of Books - of Biographies, Histories, and Speculative Diatribes on the Philosophy of Life, Discourses on Modern Politics and Social Ethics; in all of some twenty volumes.[64]

Lushington notes that Carlyle's writings were "the fruit of thirty years of public service; the work of the man's life". He comments that he found in them "one deep purpose" which was "to make Englishmen understand their Present Time. For this man is in dire earnest. He cannot forget this fact, to him supreme in importance above all others, that he and we do now exist – as individual men, and likewise members of a National Commonwealth; men and Englishmen – with work to do! 'To know our own time' he has said 'and what it bids us do is ever the sum of knowledge for all of us.' Here we can see just how much Lushington had come under the spell of the prophet.

This final essay then turns to one of Carlyle's most controversial dictates, and one which has caused later generations to label him as right wing and racist. In

[64] Ibid., p. 743.

dealing with the issues of what Carlyle called "The Negro Question"[65] Lushington reveals what appears to be a less comfortable side of his own philosophy and one which would at first reading seem to be totally out of kilter with the caring nature which Lushington went on to demonstrate in his later life. Given the general public condemnation of this essay it is rather surprising that Lushington should have written as follows:

> One other example and only one I will give of his power of grappling with Social Problems, his solution namely of the Negro Question. It may be gathered from what I have already stated that he regrets the Emancipation Act of 1834 as a hasty measure, and advocates an immediate return to a system of partial compulsion. No man should, in his opinion, be allowed to live an idle life at his own pleasure, least of all the black man, conditionally prone to indolence; neither should any be driven to work by the necessity of mere competition, which acts only on the meaner part of a man. Hence Carlyle repudiates with scorn the remedy proposed and even partially tried of importing other free Negroes or Indians to eat up the pumpkins, and so restore Industry: the end of that would be 'a Black Ireland!' [66]

Here Lushington applies his legal mind to the issue by suggesting that what is required is "a just relation of Master and Servant". This was an area in which

[65] Carlyle's *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question"* was first published in Fraser's Magazine in 1849 under the title *The Negro* Question. Carlyle's reaction to the anger it provoked led him to replace 'negro' with 'nigger' in a slightly expanded and revised version which was published as a pamphlet in 1853.
[66] Lushington, *Carlyle*, p. 769.

Lushington was shortly to have a great deal of experience through his work with the trade unions. However it was not simply a matter of the relationship of master and servant for here the "Master must be the Anglo-Saxon and the Servant the Negro; not otherwise at all".[67] Lushington then deals with Carlyle's observations on slavery. Carlyle's argument is that, "If the Black gentleman is born to be a servant, and, in fact, is useful in God's creation only as a servant, then let him be hired not by the month, but a very much longer term. That he be 'hired for life' – really is the essence of the position he now holds!" Lushington then develops this argument by addressing the situation in America where he urged:

> Keep Slavery, but make it just. Unnecessary cruelties (all real cruelty), violations of natural ties; all this might and should be firmly suppressed by supreme and local governments; wages (small perhaps but yet wages) should be given to the Black men, and true human treatment including teaching and other things. In fact a whole Code might be formed of the regulation of duties between Master and Slaves; Carlyle suggest these two provisions as very necessary; 1st That Slaves be *adscripti gelbae* as were the Saxon serfs, not removable from their homes against their will. 2nd That a fair sum be fixed by law, on paying which, any Black man should be entitled to his freedom. He adds a warning to America, that no unjust Slavery, no unjust thing can last.[68]

[67] Ibid., p. 769.
[68] Ibid., p. 769.

Lushington's responses to Carlyle's dictates on slavery are surprising given the role that Stephen Lushington had taken with Wilberforce in the abolition movement.[69] The apparent racist tone of Carlyle's diatribe was not well-received in Carlyle's day. In fact it offended every shade of respectable opinion. His arguments in defence of slavery took his general social philosophy to an extreme degree. Without attempting in any sense to justify either Carlyle's views or Lushington's support of them it is necessary to contextualise what was being written here.

Sheila McIntosh in her paper on Carlyle and racism has pointed out that there were some who believed that slavery was degrading and dehumanising to both the slave owner and the slave but at the same time also believed that black races were essentially inferior and would forever remain so or that blacks could achieve equality with whites only after they had been civilised by education in white European culture and values.[70] Lushington tacitly supported Carlyle's view that, "No man should, in his opinion, be allowed to live an idol life at his own pleasure, least of all the black man, constitutionally prone to indolence."[71] The emancipation of slaves in the British Empire may have been achieved in 1833 through the work of Wilberforce supported by men such as Stephen Lushington,

[69] Stephen Lushington demonstrated his concern for the plight of slaves in a very practical way when, in 1850 he provided a home at Ockham for the two celebrated escaped American slaves, William and Ellen Craft. The Crafts, who published their amazing story in 1860 under the title *Running A Thousand Miles For Freedom*, were helped by Lady Byron and Harriet Martineau. They spent three years receiving an education at Ockham Industrial School under the supervision of two of Vernon Lushington's sisters. It is interesting that Harriet Martineau, the translator of Comte's *The Positive Philosophy of Auguste Comte*, was involved in this episode and it is interesting to speculate that whether, through her involvement with the Lushington family, she exercised any influence on Vernon's adoption of Positivism.

[70] S. McIntosh, *Carlyle and the Caribbean*, The Carlyle Society Papers – Session 2008-9. Edinburgh, 2008 pp.17-33.

[71] Lushington, *Carlyle*, p. 769.

but the problem still remained in the practice of other countries. However by the late 1840s another problem had become apparent and this was the inefficiency of the West Indian sugar farms as working units.[72] There was a mainstream shift in thinking on slavery and concern that the former slaves were unable to work without proper supervision. Freed slaves also laboured under great economic disadvantages which were hardly a fair test of their work ethic. Froude wrote that Carlyle meant "that they ought to have been treated as human beings, for whose souls and bodies the whites were responsible; that they should have been placed in a position suited to their capacity, like that of the English serf under the Plantagenets; protected against ill-usage by law; attached to the soil; not allowed to be idle, but cared for themselves, their wives and their children, in health, in sickness, and in old age."[73] Lushington's approach to this subject was similar to that expressed by Carlyle and reflects his rejection of democracy so forcibly expressed earlier at the Cambridge Union.

Perhaps the question is not therefore so much of Carlyle's (and it follows, Lushington's) apparent inhumanity. It relates to Carlyle's upbringing where the protestant work ethic had been central. Carlyle's stance was that if the former slaves would not work, they should be compelled to do so. This attitude gained some support but not universally because of the recognition of the situation the freed slaves were in. More generally Carlyle did not feel that he was attacking the blacks; his target was the liberals who, he considered, were destroying them.

[72] In her *Civilising Subjects: Metropole and Colony in the English Imagination 1830-1867*, (Oxford: Polity 2002) Catherine Hall has written extensively about this problem and the public reaction to it.
[73] James Anthony Froude, *Thomas Carlyle. A History of His Life in London, 1834-1881* (London: Longman, Green, and Co. 1891), Vol. II, p. 26.

He named these “the Exeter Hall philanthropists”. However this is not how the public saw it. In any event, it also raises the fact that Lushington’s support for Carlyle’s views is rather surprising given that his father, who, through his works with Wilberforce for the abolition of slavery, had readily identified himself with the group that Carlyle was attacking. Carlyle’s *Pamphlets* reflect the work of a man who is turning his back on the world in despair. In these publications Carlyle ceases to be the prophet and, in an increasing sense of isolation, he becomes the sage.[74]

In the following chapter I will consider Lushington’s recognition and outworking of Comte’s *altruism*, or service to humanity. Although altruism is not a word within Carlyle’s vocabulary, it is important to note here that in the context of the position of the black plantation workers, both Carlyle and Lushington had a general concern for the dignity of mankind. However that dignity could only be maintained through diligence and hard work.

Finally, after this agreement with what appears to be a deeply unpalatable side of Carlyle Lushington reveals just how much he has come under the prophet’s influence by concluding with the following paragraph.

> Reader! I know not whether these thoughts and counsels appear to you as practical or not; to me they appear practical in the highest sense; planted in the very loftiest conception of human duty and destiny, and in a clear

[74] LeQuesne, pp. 79-80.

> discernment of the divine Laws written in the main facts of every Social matter that he examines: temperate as well as brave, loving as well as just, and each most entirely consistent with all the rest. So practical are they, that I often wish that Carlyle had not been one of England's Writers, but one of England's Governors, could that have been managed! With all his great truthfulness, courage, wondrous judgement of men and things, and that real eloquence both of tongue and pen; - what might he not have done in these eventful years in Parliament in Office? But we will regret nothing; only be grateful for what we have; very, very grateful. Have we not now "A Lamp for the New Years? [75]

Given Carlyle's well known sympathy for untrammelled authority, Lushington, in expressing his wishes that Carlyle was not just a writer but, more effectively, a governor of the nation, appears to be suggesting that he might have been happy with some sort of dictatorship under Carlyle and a corresponding surrender of civic function on his own part.

A Continuing Relationship

Lushington's admiration for Carlyle continued into the latter's old age when Carlyle had lost his early prophetic edge and was becoming isolated from society. Carlyle had a position of deep despair and anger at the direction which he believed society was taking. In the late 1850s and 1860s Lushington became a

[75] Lushington, *Carlyle* p. 770.

regular visitor at 24 Cheyne Walk where he always received a warm welcome. Letters from Lushington to the daughters of John Richardson (1780-1864) a Scottish lawyer and a friend of both Carlyle and Sir Walter Scott contain important glimpses into the lives of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, including a confidential observation by Lushington on the distancing of their relationship due to Carlyle's ever increasing absorption in his work.

In 1859 Lushington wrote to Helen Richardson after returning from a visit to the Richardsons' home in the border country. In describing his train journey Lushington wrote, "when [the train] stopped, and the man went down the line of carriages tapping the wheels with his hammer to prove them, I thought how Carlyle always clinked under the iron, even when he has been carrying us away at a hundred miles an hour." Lushington is likening Carlyle to the wheels transporting a train that represents everything that Lushington then held to be true. Later that year he wrote to Helen's sister Joanna:

> You will smile when I say he [Socrates] perpetually reminds me of Carlyle, but so it is. He too lived in an age of refinements & luxury, & glib superficial knowledge passing itself off for wisdom, & his one aim was to recall people to simplicity of life, to sincerity of mind, & strenuous rigorous performance of the commonest duties. He is accordingly to Xenophon, always holding forth on the elemental mysteries of human life, & the duties that spring from gratitude to parent, faithfulness to friends, affectionate forbearance to brothers, manful self denial, love of

good men, & so on; & he does all this in just the same humorous fashion as Carlyle does.[76]

The following year Lushington wrote to Joanna Richardson "I had a long evening with him (Carlyle) a little while back with talk about many things, 'sudden death', modern unbelief or doghood, Valentine's day, & the whole story of Valentine & Orson, - some part of which I duly got down on paper afterwards for my satisfaction in aftertimes. Mrs C. is better this winter than for several years' back. But she gave me an account of her daily life, which struck me as very sad, - so lonely it seemed to be – breakfast in silence, dinner separate, & he absorbed in his work, out of reach of fireside talk. This between ourselves. Must it ever be that those who give most to the world are themselves strangers to household joys?"[77]

That Jane Carlyle felt comfortable enough to share her concerns with the young Lushington is evidence enough of the place he had by then secured within the Carlyle household. Even Monkton Milnes, noted for his great talent for friendship with difficult people, found that it took some time "in the

[76] Lushington to Helen Richardson, 1859, NLS MS.3990, ff.232-237; Lushington to Joanna Richardson, 1 November 1859, NLS MS3990, ff.311-318.

[77] Lushington to Joanna Richardson, (probably 4 March 1860), NLS MS.3990, ff.319-323. The paper on which Lushington recorded his evening with Carlyle has now been found in a collection of Lushington's Positivist papers which are now in my possession. The notes consist of two pages, written on both sides, in which Lushington has noted Carlyle's remarks on Henry Cromwell, Macaulay and "sudden death", Valentines and Soldiers. Under "Soldiers" Lushington records Carlyle's comment "It is one of the gravest thoughts to a citizen, the condition of our fighting apparatus, - no man knows anything about it – Wellington a valiant, clear, determined man, a great captain – but not much theoretical soldiery – Frederick, I suppose had read a thousand times as much!."

fundamentally much more difficult task of securing Mrs Carlyle's liking."[78] Shortly after Lushington's first appearance at Cheyne Walk, Jane Carlyle wrote to her friend Kate Sterling Ross mentioning "fascinating Mr Lushington, with dove's eyes and without two fingers who come here now to take tea very often."[79] The expression "dove's eyes" is said to signify the discernment that comes with mature reflection. Was it this aspect of Lushington's character linked, perhaps, with a slight hint of matronly adulation for the younger man that explains Jane's willingness to talk freely with him?[80]

In April 1857 the sculptor Thomas Woolner wrote to Tennyson's wife, "I saw Vernon Lushington last night; he said that he saw Mrs Carlyle on Saturday night and that she was looking very ill and thin; this is not brilliant, but that she sees anybody is an improvement."[81] Mrs Carlyle was not the only person taken with Lushington, as Carlyle's letter to him of 5th January 1857 suggests: "My wife wishes much, in case you have nothing better to do, that you wd come to us Tomorrow (Tuesday) Evg. to meet some 3 (or perhaps only 2) agreeable persons whom she expects. As to the agreeable persons I can say nothing; but will add on

[78] Alethea Hayter, *A Sultry Month. Scenes of London Literary Life in 1846*, (Robin Clark, London 1992), p. 38.
[79] Jane Welsh Carlyle to Kate Sterling Ross, 27 December 1856. The Carlyle Letters Online. This letter confirms the statement by Augustus Hare referred to earlier. These are the only two references I have found regarding this accident. After describing Lushington Jane Carlyle writes to Kate "he often talks of you *with interest*." Kate, the daughter of Carlyle's friend John Sterling, had married Alexander J. Ross, a liberal theologian and writer, in 1856. Both the Carlyles strongly disapproved of the match.
[80] Contrary to Monkton Milnes' comments, Jane Welsh Carlyle is said to have had a great capacity for friendship and "all men, young and old, like to be flattered and this she managed with great skill … she was never short of admirers though sometimes she could be accused of leading on certain young gallants who pursued her." See Liz Sutherland, "Jane Welsh Carlyle and her Gentleman Callers", *The Carlyle Society Papers – Session 2006-2007. New Series No. 19*. pp. 13-22.
[81] Woolner to Lady Tennyson, 28 April 1867. *Thomas Woolner, R.A., Sculptor and Poet. His Life In Letters* (Chapman & Hall, Ltd. 1917), p. 133.

my own score that the sight of you will, as always, be pleasant to me again. Come therefore, if you can manage it."[82]

In 1860 Lushington visited Italy with William Rossetti and whilst there they visited the poet Robert Browning and his wife and family in Siena. The Brownings received their visitors warmly and asked Lushington to take a message of greeting back to Thomas Carlyle. Shortly after his return Lushington called at Cheyne Row one evening and found both Thomas and Jane at tea with John Ruskin. Lushington was invited to join them and later wrote Elizabeth Barrett Browning a lengthy letter in which he reported back on his conversation with the Carlyles and with Ruskin.[83] Carlyle reminisced about a number of matters during the evening including his thoughts on Voltaire, Goethe and Walter Savage Landor whom Lushington had met at the Brownings. Carlyle also told a story of how he was nearly drowned as a boy and how he had seen the notorious murderer Hare in an Inn in Dumfries. When Lushington asked Jane Carlyle "How faring?" she replied in characteristic manner with one word, "Enduring." Ruskin offered to drive Lushington home as the evening drew to a close and then set out pouring out his troubles to his passenger. Ruskin was in despair for art and architecture throughout Europe. He was also concerned for the future of Turner's works. Ruskin then said how lonely he felt and "I have parents, true; they are excellent people, and I love them dearly, but they do not understand me." Ruskin concluded by sharing his theological doubts. While this letter is important for what it reveals about the Carlyles and Ruskin, it is also important

[82] Carlyle Letters Online.
[83] Lushington to E.B. Browning, 9 November 1860. The Browning Collection, Ella Strong Denison Library, Scripps College.

in that it confirms reveals how people found Lushington to be a sympathetic and trustworthy listener.

The following year Lushington wrote to Joanna Richardson that he had:

> … just returned from taking tea with Mr & Mrs Carlyle, He spoke to me most kindly, as usual of your father. He seemed very well, & when I came in he was busy correcting proof sheets of Frederick Vol. III. Mrs Carlyle too has passed thro' the winter much better than usual. Among other things he spoke of Scotland 100 years ago, the superior character of the lawyers & society generally in Glasgow & Edinburgh. Lord Hailes' 'Annals of Scotland', he sd. was the best bit of history contributed by British pen in the 18th or 19th century. He gave me the history of steam boats, 'that have since spread a conflagration over the world' – it originated in the little pool of Dunlarwin in Nithsdale![84]

Regrettably Lushington makes no mention of any words that Carlyle might have had upon the subject of Comte and Positivism, but this was some years before Lushington made public his beliefs by joining the committee of the London Positivists. In any event Lushington may have felt it unwise to raise this touchy subject with Carlyle who had expressed his scorn for Comte on a number of occasions. One of these was mentioned at the start of this chapter. Another was

[84] NLS MS 3990.

in a letter to his brother John in which Carlyle describes Comte with "some windy French Prophet of the New Epoch." [85]

When Carlyle reached the age of eighty on 4 December 1875, he was presented with a gold medal and an address of admiration signed, as a mark of appreciation, by many noted figures of the nineteenth century including such luminaries as Darwin, Browning, Tennyson, George Eliot and Anthony Trollope. This document now hangs in 24 Cheyne Row and amongst the 119 signatures of the great and good who jostled to express their appreciation of Carlyle is that of Vernon Lushington whose final public act of appreciation for Carlyle probably occurred in 1894, when a subscription fund was set up to purchase 24 Cheyne Row, Chelsea and many of its contents for the nation. To this fund Lushington contributed the sum of two guineas.

What then was the role of Carlyle in Lushington's life and, conversely, what did Lushington mean to Carlyle? To take the last question first, it is clear that Lushington quickly found a place of welcome at Cheyne Walk. Was this simply because of his generous offer of editorial help or is it is possible that Carlyle recognised within the enthusiastic young Lushington something of himself a decade earlier? It may also be that Carlyle saw in Lushington the qualities he had discerned in John Sterling, the young friend whose death he mourned and whose obituary is perhaps one of Carlyle's most readable pieces of writings? Although older than Lushington by twenty five years, Sterling had followed a similar path

[85] Thomas Carlyle to John A. Carlyle, 28th November 1853. Carlyle Letters On Line.

in his academic life by entering Trinity College, Cambridge where like Lushington, he became a distinguished member of the debating society and a member of the Cambridge Apostles. Sterling also intended to enter the legal profession but instead chose the literary world. Sterling later purchased the *Athenaeum* magazine and published several of his own works. Although Carlyle did not share Sterling's religious views, he admired his clear convictions in an age of spiritual turmoil. Sterling's early death was a sad blow to Carlyle.

As to the first question of Carlyle's role within Lushington's life, undoubtedly he initially saw Carlyle as the hero *par excellence*. He found himself in a position whereby he could offer his services freely to Carlyle at a time when Carlyle was in need of such help and this role would have placed Lushington high in the regard of not only of his friends but also within the wider world of the intellectual aristocracy. Carlyle had a major impact upon Lushington and the earnest young men of that generation. Jessop has written of how "some contemporary readers, notable for being agnostics, found in Carlyle's natural supernaturalism an inspiring agnosticism that was to play a role in the demise of their own religious belief."[86] These included T.H. Huxley, William Kingdon Clifford, Leslie Stephen and John Tyndall. Such an outcome would not have been in Carlyle's mind although he was both critical and sometimes contemptuous towards all rival and competitive forms of Christianity.

[86] R. Jessop, *Carlyle's Agnosticism* in Literature and Belief Vol. 25: 1, 2, Thomas Carlyle, Centre for the Study of Christian Values in Literature, Brigham Young University (2005), pp. 381 – 433.

Quite early in his life Carlyle had rejected the formal logic of his native Presbyterianism, but he continued to retain until his death what has been called an "intense preoccupation with original sin and the problem of evil." Carlyle had created a secular spirituality but therein lay a problem for Lushington and others who sought for answers in a more religious formula. It was as Henry Sedgwick, another contemporary of Lushington's, later wrote: "One sees that in an irreligious age one must not let oneself drift, or else the rational element of oneself is disproportionately expressed and developed by the influence of environment, and one loses the fidelity to one's true self."[87] Lushington and others were seeking to separate support for Christian morality from support for its theology.

The Lushington archive contains some sheets on which Lushington has written down his thoughts on Carlyle – probably for a lecture to the London Positivists in the 1880s. These reveal how Lushington had by then recognised that the older Carlyle was no longer the prophet of his early years upon whom he, and others, had heaped such adulatory praise in the 1850s. In particular Lushington, by then a convinced pacifist, found Carlyle's attitude towards war, as he felt it was expressed in *Frederick*, to be unacceptable. It was a strange conclusion given the fact that it was one of the works that Lushington had helped to revise. Lushington wrote:

[87] Sutherland, p. 85.

> This is not what we want. It is even what we don't want. We don't want to increase, to feed our interest in war: we want to reduce it. We want to study the wide fields of peace where there is so much to learn, so much to do, where too lies the future of the race.[88]

This is also something of a volte-face for Lushington who had written so supportively of the Crimean War in 1855. Lushington then turns to the issue of France and Germany where, naturally, the Positivists sided with the French.

> I am sorry to think that almost his [Carlyle's] last performance was one of the vicious kind. In Nov. 1870, when the French & German were discussing terms of peace, he wrote an elaborate & of course a very fierce letter to the Times upholding the demand of Germany to keep Alsace & Lorraine… Now I cannot conceive a worse use to put history to than to make Nation's revenge the wrongs, or the fancied wrongs, of 200 years ago. [89]

Lushington then condemned Carlyle for urging on "the spirit of bitter war" and encouraging the "insular temper and imperial ambition of England", something which was quite contrary to the Positivist view on the Colonies. Even in civil matters Lushington believed that Carlyle "advocated a coarse violence"; how he mocked science and insulted the beautiful art of modern poetry, romance & music." Lushington then with his own first hand observation of the relationship

[88] Lushington manuscript notes in my possession.
[89] Ibid.

of Thomas and Jane, berates Carlyle for his neglect of "the gentle influence of Woman". Finally Lushington wrote that "one almost feels inclined to class him among what his Cromwell wd. have called the Malignants." Finally Lushington pronounced a harsh judgement on Carlyle:

> His spiritual pride not only darkened his heart, it darkened his mind also so that he could not see things of the utmost importance, he could not get to see them. He could not discern the nature of the Modern Intellectual Movement: he could sympathise neither with its science its poetry not its art; he condemned it all.[90]

This frustrated disappointment is quite contrary to the praise that Lushington had heaped upon Carlyle two decades earlier. However Lushington did conclude his notes on Carlyle and *Frederick* more generously when he wrote how it would be an injustice to measure Carlyle by his whole career. Instead he should be judged "most of all by his earlier, juster, saner, wiser, happier utterances." Indeed Lushington considered that Carlyle's views on "the dignity & glorious destiny of Labour, and generally of veneration & gratitude to the Past, constitute him to us one of the high & generous forerunners of Positivism [deleted] the religion of Humanity. He wd. have disclaimed the honour with disdain, but it is his for all that. And I therefore conclude with some stanzas from a Positivist Hymn, which I truly think express the better mind of Carlyle" Unfortunately, Lushington recorded neither the reason he excised "Positivism", replacing it with "the

[90] Ibid.

Religion of Humanity", or the title of whatever hymn it was that he considered reflected "the better mind of Carlyle." Carlyle most certainly would have disclaimed the honour that he had been a "high & generous forerunner of … the Religion of Humanity."

In his essay on Carlyle Lushington remarks, "Thus, as Carlyle has shown, the Feudal Barons were in their day the right rulers of England; the Pope at Rome was the right ruler of Christendom; the white Englishman was, nay is, the proper master of the Jamaican negro."[91] This was fully in accord with the Positivist view. However Carlyle offered no solutions to society's problems but he "adjured effort, truthfulness and moral courage. He was no friend to liberal individualism, but in the universities during the 1840s and 1850s he eased the transition to it."[92] Moreover Carlyle's prophetic rants cleared the ground for the development of new philosophies such as that offered by Comte.

Carlyle wrote, "The whole world is … sold to Unbelief; [the] old Temples crumble down; and men ask now: Where is the Godhead?"[93] The answer the Positivists offered was not that which Carlyle was seeking, but it did nonetheless, promise a new totality in the Religion of Humanity and it was here that Lushington found expression for his spiritual needs. Here again common ground is found between Carlyle and Comte when the former expressed the altruistic ideal by writing, "Surely it is better for a man to work out his God given faculty

[91] Lushington, *Carlyle*, p. 337.
[92] Harvie, p. 38.
[93] T. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus, the Life and Opinions of Herr Teufelsdrockh* (London: Chapman & Hall 1896), 1, 131.

than merely to speak it out". In 1862 Lushington echoed these words when he wrote to Harry Seeley, "And one thing let us both remember, that it is not in words but in works; not in saying but in doing, that we shall find help & furtherance onwards."[94] The depth of Lushington's conviction of the need for social and political change is revealed in another letter to Seeley, written just a year later, in which he states, "that Society has in simple truth to be built up anew (& not merely old idols knocked down or pretty things sung) & that to this end we need not only noble workers, but noble teachers, & these latter as soon as possible, - is a deep conviction of mine."[95]

It was this conviction and the belief that it would be achieved through actions rather than words that led Lushington to the altruism which lay at the heart of Comte's Positivism. T.H. Huxley believed that Carlyle had led him to know "that a deep sense of religion was compatible with the entire absence of theology."[96] For those like Lushington who sensed that they were living at a critical juncture in mankind's history, Comte offered historical confirmation and explanation for this belief. The question of whether Carlyle had prepared the way for Comte in Britain may remain a matter for conjecture. His *French Revolution* probably, and certainly inadvertently, helped support the significance of the revolution in Comte's three stages. If nothing else Carlyle nurtured in Lushington a "deep sense of religion" which eventually led him to Comte, Positivism and the Religion of Humanity.

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[94] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 11 April 1862.
[95] Ibid. 19 April 1863.
[96] James C. Livingston, 'British Agnosticism', *Nineteenth-Century Religious Thought in the World*, (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 231-269 (p. 258).

- 5 -

The Priest – Auguste Comte

In 1870 Lushington wrote to his wife, "Don't read Comte's Letters, unless you feel quite inclined. To me they are very interesting as setting forth to some degree the life of the man who wrote certain books of first rate importance for my life, but their general effect is sad." Jane replied: "As to Comte's Letters dear one – I feel very much inclined to read them only I am a little hindered by the fact that I am not as liberal minded about some things as you are."[1] This exchange of letters confirms not only the importance of Comte to Lushington but also that his wife did not share his "liberal" views. On the eve of their marriage in 1865 Lushington had suggested that they take a volume of Carlyle's writings on their honeymoon. His recommendation of Comte's letters was a little more circumspect and he was clearly treading lightly. Five years into their marriage, Jane remained a committed Christian and a member of the Anglican Communion. It was not possible for her to be as "liberal minded" as her husband when it came to Comte - the man whose Religion of Humanity was designed to supersede the faith that was the bedrock of her religious belief. These differences of opinion between Lushington and his wife will be considered in a later chapter.

Long after his wife's death, and when in the wake of his twin brother's death, he was contemplating his own mortality, Lushington wrote a letter which contains

[1] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 23 August 1870. SHC 7854/6

his clearest statement regarding the importance of Comte in his life. In 1907, at the age of 75, Lushington wrote to his youngest daughter:

> Dearest Sue,
>
> I shall die, - as I have lived – a Positivist. But for family & personal reasons, - which I need not state for you know them – I desire to be buried with Church of England rites in either Pyrford Kingsley or Gunby Church yard.[2]
>
> The Funeral should of course be as simple as possible. But as regards the Service I should like it to be arranged that 3 good old well known hymns be sung – one of them at the grave-side.[3]
>
> The Gravestone to correspond to our Pyrford stone (which was made for me by a firm in Westminster Bridge Road called Farmer & Brinkley or something like that). The inscription to record my name & dates of my birth & death – no more.
>
> V.L.

Lushington's statement that he would die as he had lived – a Positivist - despite seeming to be contradicted by his wish for a Church of England burial, is central

[2] Pyrford, Surrey had been his first home after his marriage and it was where his wife was buried. Kingsley, Hants was to be his final home and Gunby, Lincolnshire was the home of his daughter Margaret, who had married Stephen Massingberd of Gunby Hall.
[3] Lushington was buried next to his wife at Pyrford. A commemoration service was held at the Positivist Society Rooms on February 17 with an address by Frederic Harrison.

to this study.[4] Positivism had been Lushington's purpose for living, around which everything else, be it religion, politics, the arts, and even family life, revolved. In 1889 Lushington wrote "none can say that Positivism is timid in speculation. We seek a total regeneration in religion, in government, in art, science, education, in industry, in social domestic & personal life. These high objects we avow."[5] This was the challenge that Lushington embraced.

Although Lushington had been privileged to know many of the great men and women of the Victorian era and was undoubtedly influenced to some degree by those who became personal friends such as Browning, Tennyson, Ruskin, and Morris (whose relationship with him will be discussed later), none of them, not even Carlyle, could meet his deeper spiritual and emotional needs. If Carlyle was the prophet of his age then Auguste Comte was to be his high priest.[6]

"A Light in a Dark World"

When orthodox Christianity with its flawed creeds and intransigent dogma failed him, and when the harsh pragmatism of Carlyle could not provide the spirituality

[4] Lushington's request for a Church of England burial service is not as contradictory as it may first appear. The Positivist did not dismiss Christianity. Indeed although Lushington considered Christianity "a construction of human imagination" it was still a glorious achievement and mighty instrument of civilisation, and the immediate mother-type of Humanity." Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity* p. 24.

[5] Lushington, "The State". Manuscript notes for a lecture to the Positivist Society at Newton Hall, 14 April 1889. In my possession.

[6] Comte's claim to "priesthood" was indirectly established when he produced *The Catechism of Positive Religion* which was translated into English by Richard Congreve in 1858. Conversely Lushington called Comte "the spokesman and prophet of his age." (*The Worship of Humanity, 1896).*

he sought, it was to Comte that Lushington turned. In 1863 he wrote to H.G. Seeley:

> Once more I would ask you to read Auguste Comte! I'll tell you why. He will show you, make you really feel the vastness of the general problem which is set before the present generation. Reading him you cannot but perceive the intellectual anarchy of the present time; & that the first thing to be done is to put that right. Which cannot be but by first surveying (as he has done or better) our whole intellectual kingdom. Without this political wisdom is impossible; … But once more in this view I can earnestly commend Comte to you. He has been to me a light in a dark world.[7]

Given his liberal upbringing and his time at Cambridge, Lushington was probably like Frederic Harrison - "surprised to find how prepared" he was for "the main doctrine."[8] But why was it that Comte, above all others, made such an impression on Lushington? What did The Religion of Humanity have to offer that other belief systems could not? Was Lushington's adoption of *The Religion of Humanity* a response to a crisis of faith situation? To answer questions such as these it is necessary first to consider the context of the time in which Lushington lived and the re-evaluation of the claims of traditional Christianity which had

[7] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 19 April 1863. In another letter to Seeley, dated 22 October but not year, Lushington wrote, "By all means write of Comte to me, but don't be too sure of demolishing him. Understand, if possible. My brother says you will become a fanatical positivist one day".
[8] Frederic Harrison to Charles Cookson in 1855 quoted in Kent, p. 58.

been created by biblical criticism and scientific discovery. In the midst of this crisis of faith there was always a fear that "man without religion is a nutshell in the wind."[9]

George Eliot, who had earlier experienced an evangelical conversion, underwent her own crisis of faith at this time. She did not lose her belief in God entirely but became aware of the need to find a more acceptable and encompassing expression of faith.[10] Eliot wrote that what was needed was a religion which would "inculcate a more deeply-awing sense of the responsibilities to man, springing from sympathy with … the difficulty of the human lot."[11] This is exactly what Comte's Positivism and his Religion of Humanity offered. However, although Eliot's partner G.H. Lewes adopted Positivism, she did not. Instead she found what she sought within Unitarianism which believed that while Jesus was an eminently good man he was not literally the son of God.

Comte's comprehensive ideology was specifically directed at the three most central concerns of nineteenth-century middle class and, in particular, those within the intellectual aristocracy who were facing the crisis of faith in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Those concerns were the upholding of morality, the provision of a means of controlling social change, and the creation

[9] Frederic Harrison *Autobiographic Memoirs* (Macmillan & Co., 1911), Vol 1, p.213. From a letter written Harrison, 10 March 1861.
[10] For a helpful overview of George Eliot's journey of faith see Chapter 1 of Peter Hodgson's *Theology in the Fiction of George Eliot*, (SCM Press, 2001).
[11] Eliot to Harriet Beecher Stowe, 8 May 159. *The George Eliot Letters* ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols. (New Haven, 1954-78), Vol. 5 p. 31.

of a sense of identity to the individual by defining his place within the community.

But what exactly did Comte's new religion have to offer and why did Lushington choose Comte instead of perhaps, like George Eliot, opting for Unitarianism? The answer was that Lushington could no longer believe in the existence of a supreme deity outside of mankind. To the Positivists the worship of an unknowable God seemed "preposterous." Furthermore they considered that it was harmful for people to believe in such a God because of "its tendency to relax the sense of human responsibility." Lushington believed that, "The Religion of Humanity offers this ideal Being, which unites all human excellence, with goodness necessarily predominating, as the natural centre of all affection, all thought, all action. Such Religion comes to take place of the older Religions now outworn, thus terminating in spiritual union the Intellectual Revolution which has been tormenting Europe for five centuries and more."[12] These beliefs were based upon demonstrable truths and not upon authority or tradition, or "mere subjective conceptions".[13] Instead their faith was based upon objective realities which could be seen and known. As a lawyer, Lushington would have found this aspect of Positivism greatly appealing. Malcolm Quin, who became a Positivist at the end of the nineteenth century but later reverted to the Christian faith, wrote, "Comte's appeal … may be easily explained. He presented himself as a master of

[12] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity*, p.17.
[13] *A Positivist Primer,* p.6.

synthesis, and of a synthesis which was an ordered unity of imagination, worship, doctrine, morals and life. In this he stood alone." [14]

Comte's philosophy held that man should rule his life on scientific, not metaphysical principles, and that the worship of God should give way to that of humanity. This was neatly encapsulated in this dedication of a small volume written by an American Positivist and published in 1871 entitled "A Positivist Primer".

Dedication.

To

The Only Supreme Being Man Can Ever Know,

The Great But Imperfect God,

HUMANITY,

In Whose Image All Other Gods Were Made,

And For Whose Service All Other Gods Exists,

And To Whom All The Children Of Men Owe

LABOR, LOVE, AND WORSHIP.[15]

The Positivist motto was "Love, Order and Progress" which Lushington explained as meaning "worshipping the Past, directing the Present, serving the Future." [16]

[14] M. Quin, *Memoirs of a Positivist* London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd. (1924), p. 41.
[15] Ibid p. 3.
[16] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity* p. 17.

However it was not only the orderly and systematic side of Comte that appealed to Lushington. His very nature and personality provided him with a natural predisposition towards the Religion of Humanity. Lushington's character and nature are revealed repeatedly through his acts of kindness and generosity and in the assessment of his friends who knew him as a man of feeling, sympathy and emotion. After Lushington's death the Positivist E.S. Beesly wrote "Of the seven distinct but interdependent characteristics of the Positivist Spirit Comte pronounced Sympathy to be the most decisive, as bearing on the sole source of true unity. I have never known a nature more sympathetic than that of our deceased friend."[17] Comte called these characteristics the "affections" and proclaimed them to be the highest part of humanity. Whilst it might appear contradictory to the scientific reasoning of Positivism, Comte taught that the intellect must be subordinated to the heart and that "all imagination and fancy – the soul of all that portion of our being which tends to aspiration and the ennoblement of the race – should cluster round this great conception."[18]

Furthermore, Positivism was considered by its adherents as "the most emotional of all religions … [it would] depend more upon art for its presentation than it does upon science, although the intellectual conceptions upon which it is based will still be demonstrated by the known methods of science."[19] Lushington had a passion for the arts, whether in the paintings of his friends in the Pre-Raphaelite movement; the poetry of Dante, Shelley and, later, Walt Whitman; or the music

[17] *The Positivist Review*, 1 March 1912, pp. 65-6.
[18] *A Positivist Primer,* p. 15.
[19] Ibid p. 15.

of Mozart and other great composers. One of his daughters found herself exclaiming "Why are we such an emotional family" and friends such as A.J. Munby wrote of a womanly pathos they saw in Lushington. Comte's Religion of Humanity encompassed all these things and offered the perfect opportunity for Lushington to fully express himself. Today Positivism may appear to be a strange, if not entirely bizarre philosophy, which is not always easy to grasp.[20] In its heyday Huxley famously, and with more than a hint of sarcasm, called it "Catholicism minus Christianity".[21] Huxley here seems to be suggesting that Positivism was like Catholicism both for its authoritarian stance (i.e. Comte would like to have seen himself as "Pope" of the Church of Humanity) as well in its ritualism (even down to the visual representation of the Madonna and child like the representation of Clothilde de Vaux and an infant in the Positivist churches). However, despite Huxley's quip, when set against the backdrop of the times and the need to find answers in religious formula, Positivism does seem more reasonable and Comte was, for Lushington, "a light in a dark world."

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[20] The difficulty in understanding Positivism is perhaps understood when Comte is seen as "The somewhat deranged founder of Positivism". Emmet Kennedy, 'The French Revolution and the Genesis of Religion of Man', in *Modernity and Religion,* ed. Ralph McInery (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1994), p. 81.

[21] *Fortnightly Review*, February 1869, p. 141. Earlier, in March 1860, Lushington had written to Huxley taking him to task for comments at a pubic meeting in Edinburgh which Lushington considered were used to stir up prejudices against Comte. The letter was sent to Charles Darwin with a request that it be forwarded. Darwin sent a covering note to Huxley in which he wrote "I fear that you will hate me, but I could not bear to refuse the request in the enclosed note, coming from a man whom I much like & respect – Accordingly I send the long letter by this day's post, 21 pages, but in excellent handwriting. Possibly, but not probably, it may be worth your while to read, before you answer all your critics, what a red-hot Comtist, lawyer & able man has to say for his prophet." Sadly Lushington's letter has not survived but it contained enough to elicit an immediate reply from Huxley to Darwin in which he wrote "I know quite enough about Mr Vernon Lushington to have paid every attention to what he has to say, even if you had not been his ambassador." Huxley then goes on to defend himself against Lushington stating that he will content himself "with acknowledging the receipt of Mr Lushington's letter through you." Huxley was offended both that Lushington thought he was stirring up prejudice against Comte and also that Lushington had implied that he had not read Comte. Darwin replied in an effort to mediate and urged Huxley not to take offence and none was intended. (The Darwin Correspondence Project 506649, 506654, 506658 and 506665).

Comte, "the spokesman and prophet of his age"[22]

It was Auguste Comte (1798-1857), who first coined the expression "sociology" and his political philosophy was an attempt to reconcile science, religion and the ideals of 1789 with the doctrine of counter-revolution of his own time. Initially it was a very practical belief system that would have appealed to those with a legal mind such as Lushington. By the early age of fourteen Comte found that he had "naturally ceased believing in God". In 1817 he became secretary to the French utopian socialist Saint-Simon, a relationship which lasted until 1824 when it ended in bitterness. Comte went on to give a series of lectures which were developed into his magnum opus *The Course of Positive Philosophy* in which he presented his new science of sociology and a plan for the intellectual, moral, and political reconstruction of Europe. Comte divided the progress of mankind into three historical stages. These were firstly the theological, which relied on supernatural agencies to explain what man could not explain otherwise; then the metaphysical in which man attributed effects to abstract but poorly understood causes and, finally, the "positive" because man now understood the scientific laws which control the world. Comte and his followers believed that it was this third stage that mankind was now entering.

Comte later experienced an intense emotional, but entirely platonic, relationship with a woman called Clotilde de Vaux. Following her early death, an event which led Comte to the edge of insanity, he produced two more works, *The*

[22] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity* p. 9.

System of Positive Polity and *The Catechism of Positive Religion*. It was said that Comte's *Positive Philosophy* was written under the spell of the worship of science and that his *Positive Polity* was written under the spell of his worship of Clothilde de Vaux and his memory of their love. However Mary Pickering in her definitive three-volume life of Comte now offers a convincing argument that the seeds of the *Polity* are to be found earlier in his life.

In these two works Comte began to emphasise a new universal Religion of Humanity, complete with priests and a calendar of saints. Furthermore Comte devised a new calendar in which the year was divided into thirteen months of twenty-eight days each and named the months to honour the gods of history. In chronological order these were Moses (the initial theocracy); Homer (ancient poetry); Aristotle (ancient philosophy); Archimedes (ancient science); Caesar (military civilization); St. Paul (Catholicism); Charlemagne (feudal civilisation); Dante (modern epic); Gutenberg (modern history); Shakespeare (modern drama); Descartes (modern philosophy); Frederick the Great (modern politics); and Bichet (modern science). Each day of the week was dedicated to someone considered a lesser hero such as Sophocles, Horace, Copernicus and Galileo. Lushington and his fellow Positivists used this calendar in their correspondence with each other. With this new religion, Comte maintained that society could be finally cohesive. Lushington wrote, "The Calendar was not however intended to form part of the final scheme of Positivist Worship: it was for provisional use only, namely during the concluding period of transition thro' which, as Comte

conceived, the Republic of the West has to pass, before the Positive system can be established."[23]

Positivism in England

Most of Comte's ideas were developed in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, but it was not until the 1840s that they reached England. Although J.S. Mill's *Logic* (1843) helped to make Comte better known, it was largely due to Richard Congreve that Positivism gained a foothold in England. During a visit that Congreve made to Comte in Paris after the 1848 revolution, Comte encouraged him to study the positivist philosophy, polity, and religion, in relation to British history. Congreve became master of the Lower Fifth form at Rugby School under Thomas Arnold's successor, A.C. Tait, a future Archbishop of Canterbury. His masterful personality made a great impact on several of his pupils including J.H. Bridges and Vernon Lushington's brother Godfrey – both of whom later became leading Positivists.

In 1848 Congreve left Rugby to become a tutor at Wadham College, Oxford where he further extended his influence of his former pupils as they came up to the university. Congreve, then in Holy Orders, was aware of his personal influence and exercised caution in its use writing to Godfrey Lushington: "there is no man I would rather take with me than you, but I would not lift a finger to

[23] Lushington's manuscript notes on the Positivist Calendar are in my possession.

persuade you."[24] Although Comtism in England was initially an Oxford movement, as explained earlier, it soon spread to Cambridge. In 1902 Leslie Stephen reminisced to Frederic Harrison that if he had gone to Oxford instead of Cambridge he might have become a Positivist. Charles Kingsley, as Regius Chair of History at Cambridge, saw Positivism as a threat to Christianity. When he expressed his concern that the reason for the growth in the number of students interested in history in the 1860s was the influence of Comte, Seeley tried to reassure him by saying that he hoped to combat the Frenchman's philosophy, albeit by "trying to induce the Church to appropriate what is good in it."[25]

Harriet Martineau's translation of Comte's *Positive Philosophy* into English in 1853, for which she received Comte's personal commendation, helped make Comte and his philosophy known to a much wider audience and undoubtedly helped the spread of its influence in the English-speaking world. Eight years after the appearance of Martineau's translation, a useful summary of Positivist belief in England appeared in a rather unexpected place. In 1861 *Tracts for Priests and People* were published. These were written by Christian Socialists such as F.D. Maurice, J.M. Ludlow and Thomas Hughes and dealt with some of the controversial theological issues of the day. One tract in particular, No. VII, dealt with Positive Philosophy and in it we can in a sense hear indirectly from Lushington. The tract is said to have resulted from a conversation between its

[24] Bodleian MS Eng. Misc C349f.99
[25] D. Wormell, *Sir John Seeley and the uses of history*, (CUP, 1980), p. 25.

author, Ludlow, and Vernon's brother Godfrey.[26] Given the unity of mind and heart of the Lushington twins at this time, the answers (by a man given the pseudonym of "Smith" in the tract) must also reflect Vernon's thoughts at this time. When challenged by the interviewer that Comte had "simply, like Hegel, settled down into his place in the history of philosophy, as a man of original mind, who has brought a few useful truths into a fuller light, but who neither deserves to be set up as an oracle, nor to be denounced as a portent, any more than Montaigne himself", Godfrey Lushington (thinly disguised as Smith) replied, "No man, you know, is prophet in his own country. Reverencing Comte as I do, I feel proud that England should have appreciated him the best of any nation yet." Upon then being challenged to say what "Smith" found in Comte, he replied, "Infinite deliverance from all your heart–bewildering theology and brain-muddling metaphysics. I declare I never felt myself a free man, - intellectually – till the day when I read that noble passage to the introduction to the Philosophy, where he teaches us to confine our reasoning and observation to the invariable relations of succession and similitude between phenomena." There then follows a discussion about the issue of a future life which Positivism denied. It is pointed out that a passage in Volume 6 of Comte's Philosophy, deals with the advantages to be looked for from the general extinction of a chimerical hope, including a great increase in tenderness for human life. "Smith" quickly responds, "Why

[26] N.C. Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow: The Builder of Christian Socialism*, (Cambridge 1963), p.188.

not? Philanthropy does not flow from the doctrine of eternal life, but from the spread of civilization."[27]

"By schisms rent assundered"

Comte established a Positivist Society in Paris in 1850. By 1865 Leslie Stephen wrote that "Positivist" was a label which "which many young men are pleased to bear, as indicating that they are up to the very last new thing in religious creeds."[28] Two years later, in 1867, Congreve founded the first Positivist group in Bouverie Street, Strand, and Sir Henry Cotton later recalled attending lectures there where "Assembled there together was a very small but noteworthy audience, including George Eliot, George Henry Lewes, Cotter Morrison, Godfrey and Vernon Lushington, Frederic Harrison, Edward Spencer Beesley, and John Henry Bridges."[29]

Despite Lushington's enthusiasm for Positivism, after leaving Cambridge he appears to have exhibited a reluctance to be too closely identified with the cause. This may have been for fear of damaging his career prospects. There is no evidence for this except that Lushington did refer to his desire to remain silent for "family reasons". It is also likely that Lushington's government appointment as Secretary to the Admiralty would also have curtailed active involvement. Positivism was being viewed with increasing suspicion in government circles as

[27] J.M. Ludlow, "Two Lay Dialogues", *Tracts for Priests and People*, (Macmillan & Co., 1861), No. VII, p. 37.
[28] Leslie Stephen, "The Comtist Utopia", *Fraser's Magazine*, 80 (1865).
[29] Sir Henry Cotton, *Indian & Homes Memories*, (T. Fisher Unwin, 1911), p.p. 51-52.

Godfrey Lushington discovered through his post in the Home Office.[30] On 10 April 1870 Lushington wrote to Harry Seeley that he was "Still busy studying Comte".[31] Richard Congreve continued to be a strong influence in Lushington's life. On 30 August 1870 Lushington wrote to his wife that he was to attend "Mr Congreve's 'solemn assembly' the following day. He later reported back commenting, "Mr Congreve is an excellent talker & subjects & words were not wanting. Whilst with him I am always in a half protesting mood, but still more in an enquiring one & in the end I suppose considerably influenced."[32] Two month's later Lushington reported to his wife that he planned to "visit Dr Congreve, & have my feeble knees strengthened.[33] By 1871 the Positivists were being denounced as the most dangerous revolutionaries of any age or nation.[34] That same year Lushington wrote to his wife: "Godfrey and I are each sending £25 to Dr Congreve – to help him in his health trip to Italy – Don't think me extravagant."[35] Here Lushington takes a defensive stance regarding this action. It seems that being aware of his wife's struggle with his Positivist beliefs, he expected some criticism for his action – if not outright opposition. Perhaps also Jane had become aware of a whiff of scandal amongst the London Positivists

[30] When Godfrey Lushington died in 1907 Vernon was asked to write his obituary for the *The Positivist Review*. He responded by saying that he did not feel he could because he "shd. not quite know what to say without explanations which wd. be out of place & I think he wd. have preferred that we shd. Be silent about him. To you I may say that he was inalienably Positivistic if not Positivist. Perhaps he thought some of us a little over theoretic & he certainly distrusted some of our practical conclusions as to public affairs." LSE Harrison 1/47/22. In 1898 Godfrey had subscribed the sum of £1 towards the erection of a stature of Comte in France.
[31] Lushington to H.G. Seeley, 10 April 1870. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97.
[32] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 30 & 31 August 1870. SHC 7854/3/7/25.
[33] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 6 October 1870. SHC 7854/3/7/44.
[34] '*Our Own Reds'*, Pall Mall Gazette, 15 April 1871. Quoted in Royden Harrison's *Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881*, p. 267.
[35]Vernon to Jane Lushington. 21 March 1871. SHC 7854/8/6

over what would become known as the "Pradeau affair" to which I will return later in this chapter.

Whilst keeping a fairly low profile in the United Kingdom, both Vernon and Godfrey Lushington maintained a close interest in the development of the French Positivist group and made several visits to Paris to attend their meetings. On one such visit in September 1871, Lushington went to see Comte's grave and wrote to his wife: "We looked upon it with bowed heads. It is extremely simple, plain even to ugliness, but free from the detestable decoration with wh. the place abounds."[36] The following year Lushington was back for the Positivist September gathering. This visit is described in two letters to his wife dated 5 and 8 September 1872. On this occasion the Lushington brothers were accompanied by Godfrey's wife Beatrice, who appeared not to share her sister-in-law's scruples, and several others from England including Congreve. Vernon wrote how he met a M. Lonchampt "who has written Positivist prayers!" Congreve addressed a meeting of between 60 and 70 people. His address was "extremely good in point of matter I thought, but in delivery – o – too frigid, flat & worst of all inaudible – I gave up in despair from the beginning."[37] A series of letters in the archives of the Musée de Auguste de Comte in Paris reveal that both Vernon and Godfrey financially supported the French Positivists.[38] In 1871 Vernon had helped organise the visit to England by Pierre Laffitte, leader of the French Positivists, and offered him hospitality at his London home at 21 New Street.

[36] SHC7854/3/8/29.
[37] Vernon to Jane Lushington. SHC 7854/3/9/7&8.
[38] Letters of Vernon and Godfrey Lushington at La Maison d' Auguste Comte, Paris.

Lushington's close relationship with the French Positivists continued for the remainder of his life. In 1900 he was invited to join the *Occidental Positive Committee* but turned it down on the grounds of his age and the fact that he lived in London. (By this time Lushington was beginning to suffer with rheumatism and he made frequent visits to Bath for rest and recuperation.)

In 1872 there occurred an event which severely tested the unity of the London Positivists. This event was the event referred to above – "the Pradeau affair". M. Pradeau, a French Positivist and professional pianist had come to live in London the previous year with an introduction to Congreve from Dr. Robinet, one of the leading disciples of Comte in Paris. Shortly after being welcomed by his British brethren it was discovered that Pradeau had left his wife in Paris and was living in London with another lady. Robinet had failed to mention this and it greatly upset the some members of the London group. Bridges particularly was concerned and insisted to Congreve that Pradeau must separate himself from either his mistress or from Positivism. Congreve was not prepared to take this action and this led Beesley, Harrison and Crompton together with Vernon and Godfrey Lushington to protest to Congreve at what they saw as his leniency and inaction in the matter. In addition to condoning Pradeau's adultery, they also believed that Congreve was in danger of jeopardizing the propagation of Positivism among women.[39]

[39] Beesley, Godfrey and Vernon Lushington, Bridges, Harrison and Henry Crompton to Congreve, 18 November 1872, BM Add. MS 45242, ff. 15-20.

Although eventually settled in an amicable manner, the episode of the "Pradeau affair" sowed the seeds of discord among the London committee. The affair resurfaced again when Pradeau asked Congreve to confer the Sacrament of Presentation (the positivist equivalent of baptism) on his illegitimate children. Congreve became increasingly isolated from the other London positivists and turned to his French associates who were having their own quarrels. Congreve then renounced his allegiance to Laffitte, Comte's successor, and, in 1877 he wrote to the London group saying "The time is come to say that I look on all friendly relations as at an end between us." [40]

In the following year there was a split in both the French and British Positivist groups.[41] In the same year Lushington resigned his post as Secretary to the Admiralty to become a Circuit Judge. These two events appear to have allowed Lushington to feel free to openly identify with the Positivists in England on a more public note. [42] The problems amongst the French Positivists as to Comte's successor, together with the "Pradeau affair", highlighted growing differences of opinion between Congreve and his former disciples. The resulting split, or schism as it became known, was also partly of a personal nature between

[40] Congreve to Beesley, 26 November 1877, BM Add. MS 45227, ff. 62-63.
[41] It was not only the Positivist groups in Paris and London where Comte's followers found unity difficult to maintain. An embryonic group in New York faced similar problems, but over different issues, which, in 1876, led to the formation of a breakaway group. G.J. Harp, "'The Church of Humanity': New York's Worshipping Positivists", *Church History*, Vol. 60, No. 4 (Dec., 1991), Cambridge University Press on behalf of the American Society of Church History, p. 521.
[42] The Minute Book of the London Positivist Society recorded that on Wednesday 22 May 1878 "Mr Beesly announced that he had received from Mr Vernon Lushington an application to be admitted to the Society & that at the next meeting he would propose to the Society to accept Mr V Lushington." On Wednesday 29 May Lushington was accepted as a member. He attended his first meeting on 5 June 1878. LSE Harrison papers.

Congreve and Harrison. Congreve always saw Positivism as a religion whereas Harrison and the others believed that it was too early to promote this aspect of Comte and that what was required was an effective teaching programme. They believed that if Positivism ceased to teach and only organised worship it would soon become an ineffectual sect. In addition Congreve was seen to be antagonistic towards science and recent developments in biology. [43]

In November 1878 Lushington wrote to his wife: "Our two Positivist Meetings passed off yesterday pretty well. Much time was of course wasted, but there was no bad behaviour on any side. The whole thing stands adjourned for a month, but I see clearly how it will end – Congreve will keep the school. The worst is he will make little of it. He did not appear himself last night – too proud no doubt to descend into the arena." [44] Congreve went on to make himself sole leader of his own Church of Humanity with its devotional and ritualistic emphasis. Beesley and Bridges both circulated printed pamphlets criticising Congreve and, on 9 October 1878, Lushington published a short notice calling for the recognition of Laffitte as Comte's successor. In this document Lushington, in his usual generous manner, expresses his great respect for Congreve for his past work in promoting in Positivism but then censures him for his present action as follows:

> For this is no common secession, as of a man for conscientious reasons resigning the Positivist communion, and going out into the wilderness of dissent; this is a systematic attempt to create civil war in the Church." He

[43] For more on the split with Congreve see Vogeler p. 153-9.
[44] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 4 November 1878. SHC 7854 /3/15/11

> then expressed his wish to "join in any moderate and wise course that may commend itself, looking always to the interest of the universal Positivist cause.[45]

Lushington concluded that "we must renounce communion with Dr. Congreve" thereby bringing to an end his friendship for the old man who had been instrumental in his introduction to Comte and his development as a Positivist. The feeling against Congreve grew and became so embedded that, in a letter written nearly twenty years later to one of the leading French Positivists concerning the matter of Comte's successor, Frederic Harrison vehemently, and in the strongest of language, exclaimed, "Dr Congreve is simply – Satan, an unscrupulous conspirator always bent on evil, & in sowing discord." [46]

Lushington joined the breakaway group, led by Harrison, which met in Newton Hall where addresses were given on current social, political and economic issues.[47] The London Committee continued to look to their French brethren in creating this separate group and the minutes of a meeting held on 3rd November 1878 recorded that "M Laffitte had appointed a religious affairs committee composed of Mr V. Lushington, Prof. Beesly, Mr J.C. Morrison, Mr Harrison

[45] Lushington's statement was printed as an appendix to Bridges' *Appeal to English Positivists* and Beesley's *Remarks on Dr. Congreve's Circular*. A copy is in the Musée la Maison d'Auguste Comte.
[46] Harrison to Dr Constant Hillemand, 2 January 1896. Musée la Maison d'Auguste Comte.
[47] Further details of the origins of the London Positivist Committee can be found in a paper by Dr Susan Budd with the Harrison archive at the London School of Economics. It is also well covered in Gladys Smith's paper "Early English Positivists and the Religion of Humanity" in the American Sociological Review Volume 1, Number 3, June 1936.

and Mr Ellis – he himself being its President."[48] Although it was initially the very practical side of Positivism that with its emphasis on teaching and addressing social and political issues that attracted Lushington, the spiritual side, expressed in the Religion of Humanity, had a growing appeal. E.S. Beesly, in his obituary of Lushington in the Positivist Review, recalled that Lushington was "from the first a large subscriber to our funds, and he co-operated in the translation of the Politique Positive, which was published in 1877. But he did not take any public part in the propagation of our faith till 1878, when he became a member of the Committee appointed by Laffitte to carry on Positive teaching in England." [49]

Once he had joined the Committee of the London Positivists, Lushington, well experienced in the art of public speaking from his time at Cambridge, threw himself into the organisation by lecturing on a large range of subjects relating to Positivism. The archive contains a large number of preparatory notes for lectures which he gave to the London group. These notes, together with the actual lectures, reveal Lushington with an interest in Positivism verging on obsession. On 28 May 1880 Lushington led a debate on "The attitude of Positivism towards Primary Education". Later debates which were led by Lushington included "Imprisonment for Debt", "Positivist Burial" and "The Positivist Theory of Wages". His manuscript lecture notes include such varied subjects as "History and Story", "The Positivist Calendar", "Women", "Art", "Comte & The French

[48] Correspondence and papers of Richard Congreve 1837-1899. British Library Add. 45227-45264.
[49] *The Positive Review*, 1 March 1912.

Revolution", "The State", "Catholicism", "Dante", and "Drama" [50] Lushington's views on women and art will be discussed in later chapters. Lushington also led Positivist "pilgrimages" to places associated with great men of the past who had contributed to the ennoblement of Humanity such as Hampton Court (Oliver Cromwell and William III); Chalfont St. Giles (John Milton) and Stratford upon Avon where he gave a lecture on "The Life and Times of Shakespeare".

Lushington's enthusiasm for teaching which had already been demonstrated at the Working Men's College, now found a new platform in the free school run by the London Positivist Committee. There was considerable diversity in the range of subjects upon which Lushington lectured. In 1883 and 1884 Lushington taught on the history and elements of Astronomy. In 1887 he gave a lecture on "The Italian Painters" in the National Gallery and the following year, as part of a course on "The General History of Civilisation", Lushington gave the first of twenty lectures as part of the "Ancient History" section. Other lecturers in this series included Harrison, Swinny and Beesly. In 1890 Lushington spoke on "The Life and Work of Michael Angelo" at the South Kensington Museum. In December 1892 he gave three lectures during a three week period on subjects as various as "Columbus: Discovery of America, 1492"; "The Pope's Encyclical on the Condition of Labour"; and "Shelley" the centenary of whose birth was being celebrated that year. In 1895 Lushington undertook a four weekly series of lectures on "The Moral and Intellectual Powers of Man" and, in 1897, three

[50] A complete list of Lushington's published lectures in contained in the Selective Bibliography annexed to this thesis.

weeks of lectures were given on the subject of "The Revival of Interest in Things Mediaeval."[51]

But Lushington was not just a teacher within the London Positivist Society, he also took part in the various ceremonies of the Church of Humanity. A particularly novel manuscript of his is headed *Initiation – a Discourse on Positive Education* which he gave at Newton Hall on 1 April 1888. Not to be outdone by the Anglican Church with its Confirmation or the Jewish faith with its Bar Mitzvah, the Positivists invented their own rite of passage for those old enough to understand who chose to follow the philosophy of Comte.[52] In the Initiation, which took place at the age of 14, Lushington addresses the candidates with the statement:

> You leave your childhood behind you today. Hitherto your lives have been sheltered in the tranquil home. Henceforth though still continuing members & most of you I hope continuing inmates of your homes, your lives must be a good deal away – away from the immediate ever-present influences of Mother & Father, Sisters & Brothers – away from the loving guiding eye & guarding arm. You enter upon a hardening period of more or less systematic training, - a training which will always have

[51] Details of Lushington's lectures to the Positivist Society are found in the copies of the Annual Reports in the archives of Le Maison d'Auguste Comte.

[52] Comte's nine "social sacraments" were, Presentation (as an infant), Initiation (at 14), Admission (at 21), Destination (at 28), Marriage, Maturity (at 42), Retirement, Transformation (at death), and Incorporation (7 years after death). On the 27 February 1901 The New York Times carried an article "Presented to Humanity" which reported how Frederick Harrison had officiated at the ceremony of "presenting to Humanity" William Sahud, the two year old son of Dr. M. Sahud in Chicago. At the ceremony Harrison "read the presentation hymn, composed by Judge Vernon Lushington of London."

> this for its end, to fit you for what you cannot be yet – good men, and good women, useful servants to humanity, with new privileges, new powers, new duties, larger obligations.

Clearly it was this "systematic training" which led to new powers, duties and obligations that was important to Lushington. Later in his life Lushington recorded discussing "the revolution" with his old friend William Morris. Whereas Morris fought for a secular social revolution, Lushington believed that change would come from a more spiritual direction.

Two years earlier, on the twenty-ninth anniversary of the death of Comte, in a lecture on "The Worship of Humanity", Lushington set out his own views on Comte's religion. This lecture must stand alongside and be comparable in content, if not length, with his earlier essay on Carlyle, for again we hear directly from Lushington on the second of the two major influences on his life. Whilst the tone of this lecture is primarily of a positive nature with Lushington honouring Comte's role as "one of the greatest Servants of Humanity", it also reveals a critical side of Lushington's nature. Later in the lecture he distances himself in part from the human side of "the Master" by saying "We are not Comtists, though many in their ignorance often call us so. We own the Religion of Humanity which Comte taught us."[53] This distinction was clearly of importance to Lushington. Comte was only part of collective Humanity and not infallible. After honouring Clotilde de Vaux for inspiring Comte's "soul with love [which]

[53] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity* p. 10.

confirmed his great purpose", Lushington then proceeds to censure Comte's approach to his relationship with her – something which had always been held as almost sacred. Lushington, after stressing that he was speaking for himself, writes "Comte calls upon his disciples to praise this union as a sacred thing, without reserve. We cannot do so … from the point of Family Morals, - those interests which all are bound to respect and uphold."[54]

Whilst it was never suggested that Comte's relationship with Clothilde was anything more than platonic, there was evidence that he did try to persuade her to live with him. Lushington writes, "It must be admitted then that Comte in the early months of his one-year's friendship with Mdme. De Vaux often urged, and to the end earnestly desired, cohabitation; he seemed to think at the time, and even afterwards, that he was 'morally free.' We must say he was not 'morally free." It must be admitted also that Mdme. De Vaux went perilously near to accepting such misunion." Lushington adds: "we may feel disappointed and grieved to find in both him [Comte] and her [Clotilde de Vaux] a stain of revolutionary laxity".[55] No doubt marriage had led Lushington to take a more circumspect view on Comte's personal life and Jane's comments on her husband's "liberal views" have been noted.

In commenting upon Lushington's stricture with regard to Comte's personal life and his relationship with Clotilde de Vaux, the matter of his response to the personal lives of a number of his friends and acquaintances must be given

[54] Ibid p.7.
[55] Ibid p.8.

consideration. Lushington had introduced Burne-Jones to Rossetti and Burne-Jones had introduced Rossetti to William Morris, thus setting in motion a chain of relationships that that led to the well known "ménage a trois" of William and Jane Morris with Rossetti at Kelmscott Manor – a subject which will be given further consideration in a later chapter. Burne-Jones also had a number of relationships with other women as did Wilfred Blunt. Then there is the remarkable matter of the young George Gissing who, despite his marriage to a prostitute, was employed by Lushington to tutor his three teenage daughters. It appears that Lushington, while censuring Comte, turned a blind eye to these lapses of morality in those around him.

But Lushington's public censure of Comte was not the only occasion when he criticised the master. In his manuscript paper "The State" (1889) Lushington, in dealing with the subject of effective national leadership, wrote: "Let us take warning from the error of our Master [who] fell into the deplorable mistake … of approving the coup d'état of Louis Napoleon, because that adventurer put a summary stop to the Parliamentary System in France. We know now & yet only in part what that was to cost France & Europe."[56]

"The silent depths of memory"

One particularly appealing feature of Positivism to its adherents related to death and memory. Many of those who experienced a crisis of faith in the mid

[56] Lushington, *The State*, 1889. In my possession.

nineteenth century found it difficult to believe in a physical resurrection but still struggled with the finality of death. The Positivists offered the doctrine of Subjective Immortality – the rebirth of the deceased in the memories of those who followed. In other words – "the good that men do lives on" but that good must be kept alive in the collective memory of those who follow. This, for Positivists was the key to immortality. George Eliot, who might be termed "a fringe Positivist", expressed this idea well in her poem "The Choir Invisible" in which she wrote:

> O May I join the choir invisible
> Of those immortal dead who live again
> In minds made better by their presence: live
> In pulses stirr'd to generosity,
> In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
> For miserable aims that end with self [57]

Eliot's verses which expressed the hope that a well-spent life would endure in the hearts and minds of those left behind became a kind of unofficial anthem for the Religion of Humanity. The idea of living on in the memory of others was central to a form of service for the burial of the dead, published by the London Positivist Committee, in which it is stated, "The memory of those we lose is no mere reminiscence. It transfigures to each of us the lost one. Never in life did they

[57] *The Choir Invisible* was set as a Cantata by Henry Holmes and performed at Newton Hall on the Day of the Dead in 1883. Although George Eliot was certainly attracted to some of Comte's ideals, especially those of altruism and sympathy, she could never give her unqualified approval of The Religion of Humanity. See Dixon (2008), p. 105.

seem to us so tender, so pure, so steadfast, so wise; never was it in life so sweet to accept guidance, help, and consolation from them, as now that the voice of the loved one is heard only from the silent depths of memory."

The use of the word transfiguration in this context is an interesting idea with its allusion to the biblical story of Christ's transfiguration. It seems to imply that the deceased has more effect when dead than alive. In 1906, on the anniversary of her late mother's birthday Susan Lushington wrote to her father, "She can never die in the memory of those who loved her".[58] Lushington himself took up Eliot's theme when, under the heading "Burial" he wrote the following lines which were published in 1885 in his *Positivist Hymns*,

> For in the Choir Invisible
> The loved ones sing:
> Still they love here, still with us dwell,
> And blessing bring.

In another lengthy set of verses venerating Comte, Lushington wrote:

> Rich in memories benign
> Of the loved we see no more,
> Who in hearts for ever shine,
> Dearer even than before.

[58] Susan Lushington to Vernon Lushington, 22 September 1906. SHC 7854/4/15.

Secret fervour they impart,

And meek patience to the will,

Both to learn life's arduous art,

And its duties to fulfil.

The following year Lushington again took up the theme of memory in his lecture on *The Worship of Humanity*, given to the London Positivist group on twenty-ninth anniversary of the death of Auguste Comte. Lushington said: "Founder's Day is a day of rejoicing for every Religious Society that has in it a spark of real life. With us the chosen day is not the day of the Hero's birth, though that might have its own delightful spell, but the day of his death; since in our creed Death, though often so extremely sad, effects the final union of the faithful soul with Humanity; it is the consecration and spiritual renewal of the noble life, - not in any far-away Heaven up in the clouds, but here on Earth in the minds and hearts of men for ever". Again, Lushington is using death as a positive intensification, or a step forward which is almost in the manner of Christian doctrine.

"A felicitous phrase"

Alongside the more ethereal concept of immortality being related to memory, the important "doctrine" of the Religion of Humanity was that of altruism. Both Eliot's poem and Lushington's verses express aspiration for "deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn for miserable aims that end with self" and "Both to learn life's arduous art, And its duties to fulfil." Such aspirations lay at the very heart of

Positivism. Comte expressed them when he coined the word *altruisme* as meaning a moral obligation of individuals to serve others and place their interests above one's own. Comte opposed the idea of individual rights, maintaining that they were not consistent with this supposed ethical obligation. Eliot's partner, George Henry Lewes, saw *Altruism* as the opposite of *Egoism*. It was the antithesis to *self*. It was this aspect of Positivism that probably had the greatest appeal to Lushington who firmly believed in the moral obligation of individuals to serve one another and place their interests above one's own.

The word "altruism" was coined by Comte and first used by him in a published work in 1851.[59] Defined as "regard for others as a principle of action" in the OED, it was introduced into English in 1852 when Lewes described how Comte had observed that "the selfish instincts of man lead in their satisfaction to the development of unselfish instincts, how *egotism* is the impulse to *altruism* (to use a felicitous phrase coined by Comte)".[60] "Altruism" was soon absorbed into the English language and became widely used in connection with the moral philosophy of nineteenth-century England. The answer to what Comte called the "great problem of humanity" lay in the organisation of society in a way that egoism would be subordinated to altruism. This idea struck a resonance with Beatrice Webb who, freely translating Comte, wrote in her journal. "Our

[59] The first published usage seems to have been in first volume of Comte's *Système de Politique Positive*, 4 vols. Paris, 1851-54. When I was writing this chapter *The Invention of Altruism – Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain* by Thomas Dixon was published. This work has proved enormously helpful in understanding the language of altruism as it spread through British culture between the 1850s and the 1900s Collini's *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991) also contains an important chapter on what he calls "The Culture of Altruism".

[60] G.H. Lewes, "Contemporary Literature of France", *Westminster Review*, 58 (1852) pp 614-30 at 618.

harmony as moral beings is impossible on any other foundation but altruism. Nay more, altruism alone can enable us to live in the highest and truest sense. To live for others is the only means of developing the whole existence of man."[61]

"Religious aspiration and unselfish love should form the spirit of life."[62]

The appeal of altruism to Lushington was not simply in its grand ideal of service to mankind. Altruism also offered the antidote to the breakdown in the moral order which Lushington and others feared would follow the loss of traditional belief and faith. An American Positivist claimed of altruism that "when generally recognized, not only will it teach a higher individual morality than any yet known, but it will entirely reconstruct the relations of nations by teaching them, not first to consider their own wants, but the needs of those with whom they come into contact."[63] Moreover the "self-sacrificing ideal of altruism was a virtue good enough for any respectable unbeliever, and one which was independent of both the language and metaphysics of the Christian faith."[64] George Eliot, who had experienced her own crisis of faith, had famously declared, "God, Immortality, Duty – how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third."[65] Even Lushington's Cambridge friend, the atheistic philosopher Sidgwick, who had had

[61] Beatrice Potter Webb, *My Apprenticeship*, (Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1926) p. 149.
[62] George Sand quoted in F.W. Myers, *Essays: modern* (Macmillan & Co., 1885), p. 74.
[63] *A Positivist Primer* p. 110.
[64] Thomas Dixon, 'The Invention of Altruism. Auguste Comte's Positive Polity and Respectable Unbelief in Victorian Britain', *Science and Beliefs: From Natural Philosophy to Natural Science, 1700-1900.* eds. D.M. Knight & M.D. Eddy, Ashgate,
[65] Kathryn Hughes, *George Eliot. The Last Victorian* (Fourth Estate, London, 1998), p. 393, n. 14.

earlier been attracted to Positivism, felt compelled to acknowledge that, "The strongest conviction I have is what Comte called *altruism*: the cardinal doctrine, it seems to me, of Jesus of Nazareth"[66] and T.H. Huxley, who had derided Positivism as "Catholicism without Christianity". Sidgwick wrote of Comte "I cannot swallow his Religion of Humanity, and yet his arguments as to the necessity of Religion of some sort have great weight with me." Dixon writes of Lushington's close friend Frederic Farrar, Headmaster of Marlborough College, that "His version of Christianity seemed to be have been significantly coloured by positivism." In a sermon to his pupils in 1873 Farrar described Comte as "a good and wise modern philosopher".[67] Himmelfarb believed that the loss of religious zeal resulted in an intensification of moral zeal. "It is as if the Victorians, by giving to mankind what they could no longer give to God, hoped to atone for the gravity of their sin and the pain of their loss. Their morality was a displacement of religion – which may explain the fanatical quality of their morality, their need to create a Religion of Humanity."[68]

But others took a more sceptical view of altruism considering the taking up of social work to be rather more an antidote to doubt rather than the product of an alternative faith. T.S. Eliot, with Matthew Arnold in mind, cynically suggested that the loss of religious faith resulted in an "exaggerated emphasis on morals" and a tendency to confuse morals with good habits, the result of sensible

[66] Sidgwick, Add. MS.d.70, Trinity College, Cambridge.
[67] Dixon, pp. 122 & 123.
[68] Gertrude Himmelfarb, *Victorian Minds. A Study of Intellectuals in Crisis and Ideologies in Transition*, Ivan R. Dee, Inc. (1995) p. 303.

upbringing, prudence and the absence of any very powerful temptation."[69] Charles Row mocked the new movement when he wrote, "These modern times have set up a phantom called the religion of humanity, whose great moral principle is altruism, or the sacrifice of self to the idea of human nature ... a mere Caricature of Christianity. But it is powerless! Where is its army of self sacrificers? [70] Clearly Row had not met Lushington.

"A Forgotten Voice"

The Religion of Humanity has been described as "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good red herring."[71] It could be argued that Lushington and other adherents could easily have remained conventional middle-of-the-road members of the Church of England and that no-one else would have cared. They could have followed Newman to Rome or simply declared themselves agnostics. Indeed Lushington in his published essay on the *Religion of Humanity* devoted a large section expressing high praise for the Roman Catholic Church and setting out the similarities between it and Comte's new religion. However, the problem seems to have been the time in which they lived. A few years later and agnosticism, or even atheism, would not have been a problem. It seems that there remained within them a residue of faith which needed to find an expression.[72] Being men

[69] Stephan Collini, *Public Moralists – Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Oxford, 1991), p.90.
[70] C.A. Row, *Christian Evidences Viewed in Relation to Modern Thought*, (London, 1877), p. 106.
[71] Gladys Bryson, 'Early English Positivists and the Religion of Humanity', *American Sociological Review*, Vol. 1, No. 3, June 1936, 343 – 362, (p. 362).
[72] Peter Stansky, in reviewing Harvie and Kent, has written "The bright young men of the time found its ideas attractive: its support of elitism, and its pseudo-religiosity, might be useful in an

of conscience, to have remained with the Church of England would not have been possible.

Despite Lushington's hope that future centuries would widely embrace Comte and his Positivism, this never happened. In his 1886 address on *The Worship of Humanity* Lushington had said:

> By the light of the great hopes that belong to our Faith, we may see in other centuries mighty cities far and wide rejoicing on this day with all the splendour and beauty that the religious art of the future may command. It is well to think of this, for without such hope we have, as a spiritual body, no title to exist; but our present circumstances – is it enough to remind you? – are humble enough."[73]

Lushington's confident statement confirms his unwavering belief in the eventual worldwide acceptance of Comte's grand scheme of things.

The London Positivists remained active into the early years of the twentieth century. Popular and respected as they were personally, and useful as they were politically, they never gained the intellectual community's support for their basic beliefs. Huxley and Mill considered Positivism to be dangerously authoritarian and Ruskin was disturbed by what he considered to be Positivism's endorsement

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age of adjusting faiths." *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*. Vol. 10, No. 1 (Summer, 1979), pp. 171-173.

[73] Vernon Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity*, (London: Reeves & Turner, 1886), p.4.

of material progress and ugliness. Lushington's friend, and probably the greatest champion of Positivism in England, Frederic Harrison, lived on until 1923 when he died at the age of 92 having virtually outlived the movement.

At the conclusion of number VII of *Tracts for Priests and People,* the interviewer of "Smith" asserts, "I tell you that bread and wine will serve as spiritual food and drink to far-off generations, amongst which the words of Positive Philosophy shall sound but as the faint echo, in an unknown tongue, of a forgotten voice." Fifty years later *The Positivist Review* rather smugly quoted a review of Frederic Harrison's *Autobiography* in *The Spectator*, (a publication which the Positivists considered to be "an organ specially devoted to the united cause of Christianity and Imperialism!") in which it was said of Harrison "he has been one of the leaders in a movement which has probably had far more influence than is commonly suspected. The professed followers of Comte may be few, especially in England; but the present writer is inclined to think that Positivists, conscious or unconscious, are innumerable." [74]

Did Carlyle prepare the way for Comte? If Carlyle had been responsible for leading the young intellectuals of the 1840s and 50s out into the desert and leaving them there, did Comte's Religion of Humanity offer a way back for some? *The Positivist Review* posthumously published an article by J.H. Bridges headed "Comte and Carlyle".[75] In this Bridges wrote, "These two men, though they were contemporaries, had no understanding of each other's work. Carlyle in

[74] *The Positivist Review*, April 1, 1912.
[75] Ibid. August 1, 1908.

his Reminiscences speaks of Comte, *more suo*, an as 'algebraic ghost': to Comte, Carlyle was *un pur litterateur*, a brilliant writer for effect." Despite Bridges's statement there is a case for arguing that Carlyle's *Lectures on Heroes* (1840) actually reflected Comte's theology which elevated the role of humanity. Indeed some of Carlyle's heroes, such as Mahomet, Dante, Shakespeare and Frederic the Great actually had a place within Comte's pantheon of greats. Lushington's participation in the Cambridge Union debates demonstrated that there were a number of other areas of common ground on subjects such as democracy and free trade and seem to reflect a growing awareness of Comte. Perhaps the most important similarity linking them as philosophies was their historical idealism. Lushington found it possible to progress smoothly from Carlyle to Comte. He seems to have intended demonstrating his own belief that the two were not incompatible, when he published his address on *The Worship of Humanity*. The title page to this publication carries Comte's Positivist Motto, *Family, Country, Humanity*, followed by a quotation from Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*.[76] Lushington's life and public service well reflected the philosophies of both his *prophet* and *priest*.

The Religion of Humanity ultimately failed and instead of Comte becoming the first positivist Pope as he had hoped, he died in extreme poverty. His attempt to produce a catechism without supernatural beliefs led Mill to comment, "The problem with Comte's positive religion is that few people with religion would

[76] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity*, (London: Reeves and Turner, 1886) Title Page. The quotation from Carlyle is "Yes, Friends, not our Logical, Mensurative faculty, but our Imaginative one is King over us, … The Understanding is indeed thy window, too clear thou canst not make it; but Fantasy is thy eye, with its colour-giving retina, healthy or diseased."

want one without God and few people without God want a religion."[77] Despite this failure Positivism did have at least one lasting legacy - the moral obligation of individuals to serve mankind for humanity's sake which Comte called "altruism". Even Jowett, who was no friend of Comte or Positivism, when experiencing some religious doubts, wrote, "Anybody who gives himself up for the good of others, who takes up his cross will find heaven on this earth & will trust God for all the rest."[78] Having embraced the Religion of Humanity, the God in whom Lushington had chosen to place his trust was Humanity and the doctrine of altruism was to become his lifetime vocation. Lushington was content that he had found what George Eliot had expressed to Harriett Beecher Stowe as the "sense of responsibilities to man, springing from sympathy with … the difficulty of the human lot".[79]

[77] Kennedy, *The French Revolution and the Genesis of Religion of Man*, p. 79.
[78] B. Jowett, Personal Notebook 47:9, 19, 37-38, 32:46 Jowett Papers. See Cashdollar p. 386.
[79] *The George Eliot Letters* ed. Gordon S. Haight, 9 vols. (New Haven, 1954-78), V, p. 143.

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"My Life For Others"

> Henceforth we will walk together in newness of life, in singleness of mind, striving to fulfil to the uttermost our duties to one another, to our dear relations & friends, and to that larger world, who whether rich or poor, are our brothers & sisters. Dearest Jane! I look to you truthfully, that you cherish me the highest, the widest purposes that I may have or shall have. Don't suffer me to make an idol of home-comfort, or professional eminence, or even of yourself, my precious one! Of me too it is required, as it is required of every one that I should give my Life for others.[1]

This extract from a from a letter written by Lushington to his fiancée Jane Mowatt shortly before their marriage is remarkable both for its revelation of just how far Lushington had, by 1865, adopted Positivism and, more specifically, its doctrine of altruism, and for its implication of Jane's apparent acquiescence. If Jane were not already aware of the sacrifice which she was expected to make, she certainly was now. The altar at which they would exchange marriage vows a few days later would also be an altar of sacrifice for her as her husband's altruistic service to humanity took pre-eminence not just over their future home life and his career, but even above

[1] Vernon Lushington to Jane Mowatt, 1865. SHC 7854/3/1. It was in this letter that Lushington had also explained how the time would come for him to publicly join with others to "give effect to our views" on "religious matters".

his relationship with her.[2] In Lushington's paper on "Women" he set out his ideal wife as being found in his Chaucer's *The Prologue to the Legend of the Good Woman.* This is Alcestis "the ideal Wife of Antiquity who deliberately gave up her life for her husband."[3] But what did Lushington mean by "give my life for others"?

Positivism's ideal was, according to Frederic Harrison, "to enlarge the sphere of religion, to make it broader till every common act of existence is a religious act, and the rule of man's spiritual nature shall be acknowledged in industry, in art, in politics, in every social institution and habit. But …this religion must descend from the empyrean to dwell with men on earth, caring for the things of this life."[4] Three years before his marriage Lushington had written to his friend Seeley in words which echoed those of Carlyle: "it is not in words but in works; not in saying but in doing, that we shall find help furtherance onwards."[5] This chapter will examine how Lushington chose to give his life for others by expressing his altruistic ideals through a number of areas of social concern and other philanthropic activities.

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[2] Lushington was not the only Positivist to communicate such strong sentiments to his wife. J.H. Bridges wrote to his second wife, "Our duty is to annihilate ourselves if need be for the service of Humanity." Susan Liveing, *A Nineteenth-Century Teacher: John Henry Bridges. With a Preface by Professor L.T. Hobhouse and an Introduction by Professor Patrick Geddes* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1926), p. 191.

[3] Lushington, *Women*, 8 June 1879. Manuscript in my possession.

[4] Frederic Harrison, "Centres of Spiritual Activity No. II, The Positivist Society – Newton Hall" in *Pall Mall Gazette* (29 November 1883, quoted in *Autobiographic Memoirs* (London: Macmillan, 1911), Vol. 2, p. 264.

[5] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 11 April 1862. Carlyle had written "It is better for a man to work out his God given faculty than merely speak it out."

"Do the duty that lies nearest thee"

Collini writes how the British intellectual aristocracy of the nineteenth century generally chose one of four professions - the civil service, higher journalism, academia, or the law.[6] Despite Lushington's brief service in the Royal Navy, his father Stephen Lushington had always intended that his son should follow in his footsteps and take up the law, a profession which Lushington found ideally suited to the altruistic ideal. Strangely, Comte actually had a low opinion of lawyers considering them to be a most retrograde group, scavengers living off the social and intellectual stage. Furthermore he believed that it was in the lawyers' interest to preserve the status quo. Ironically Comte failed to realise that it would be lawyers, like Lushington, who through their training and skills, would be best placed to introduce his new order. In *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle wrote, "Do the duty that lies nearest thee."[7] Shillan noted: "What we are discussing is not something confined to an ivory tower or a laboratory, but was taken by men inspired by Comte straight into the forefront of the social struggles of the day. The full history of Positivist intervention into public affairs would be a remarkable document."[8] It was at that place – "the forefront of the social struggles of the day" – that Lushington chose to take his stand. The archive now provides some new insights into the range of Lushington altruistic activities which took him into "the forefront of the social struggles of his day."

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[6] Stefan Collini, *Public Moralists. Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain 1850-1930* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1991), Chapter 1.
[7] Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1858) p. 119.
[8] David Shillan, *The Order of Mankind as seen by Auguste Comte* (New Atlantis Foundation, 1963), p.6.

Lushington had undoubtedly inherited a sense of public duty akin to altruism from his father and other family members. The very idea of laying down one's life for others was considered central to the Christianity in which his forebears had been reared. The loss of traditional faith did not destroy the inherent desire of service to mankind and, perhaps, in some ways it only highlighted it. Henry Sidgwick had written, "The strongest conviction I have is what Comte called *altruisme*: the cardinal doctrine, it seems to me, of Jesus of Nazareth."[9] Although the word could be as well used both within traditional Christian belief as without, within traditional church teaching, it had been seen as primarily dedicated to God. Sutherland claims that the Clough family can be said to have demonstrated more than most the "continuing power of a Christian sense of duty, even when belief had faded."[10] The newly emerged archive provides evidence that the Lushingtons should now rank alongside the Cloughs to whom they were connected by marriage.

Beatrice Webb believed altruism to be "the impulse of self subordinating service" which, in the mid-nineteenth century, "was transformed, consciously and overtly from God to man".[11] Comte's altruism was considered quite different from anything similar which could be found within Christianity. Indeed the Positivists believed that their version of altruism was morally superior. They believed that any form of self-sacrifice expressed with the Christian faith was flawed. It was essentially selfish system because it was based on each individual's desire for reward at the end of life

[9] Trinity College, Cambridge, Add.MS.d.70. See also Dixon (2008) p. 77.
[10] G. Sutherland, *Faith, Duty, and the Power of Mind: The Cloughs and Their Circle, 1820-1960* (CUP, 2006).
[11] Beatrice Webb, *My Apprenticeship*, (London, 1926, reprinted CUP, 1979), p. 143.

and fear of eternal punishment. Lushington's letter to his wife-to-be epitomises in him the essence of altruism.

"Religion …what a man does with his gregariousness"

In the 1930s, the Hammonds defined "religion" as what man does with his solitariness and that "in this sense it may be as self-regarding as any other activity. It may take a man no farther than his own shadow."[12] However, the Hammonds go on to say there is also a sense in which religion is not about what man does with his solitariness, but what he does with his gregariousness. "Fellowship takes a man out of his solitariness... religious bodies were not only bodies of men holding certain beliefs and practising religious observances; they were bodies of people with a discipline affecting social conduct."[13] Positivism, more especially, the Religion of Humanity, offered Lushington just such "a discipline affecting social conduct". Any solitariness that Lushington might have experienced earlier in his life soon disappeared during his time at Cambridge. University life and activity provided him with plenty of fellowship with like-minded contemporaries such as the Christian Socialists who drew him into the formation and establishment of the Working Men's College in London where he worked alongside his friends Ruskin and Rossetti.

[12] J.L. & Barbara Hammond, *The Bleak Age (*Pelican Books, 1947), p. 123.
[13] Lushington certainly knew and appreciated the benefits of "Fellowship". At Cambridge he had been part of The Set, The Cambridge Union and The Apostles. He then went on to more specific groupings such as the Christian Socialists, the Working Men's College, as well as several clubs including The Century Club and The Athenaeum.

Lushington's aptitude for fair play, justice and social concern, had already been demonstrated when he was in naval training. As a practising barrister he was able to find an outlet for those concerns by putting his legal skills to good use to assist trade union leaders in the 1860s. Alongside this he found other practical ways to help with the alleviation of particular areas of suffering at the time such as that of the Manchester cotton operatives whose plight was drawn to his attention by the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell. Lushington also befriended the social reformer Charles Booth whose work did so much to publicise the misery of millions of Londoners who were living in abject poverty. In his lecture on "The State" he wrote, "Politics we must watch & from time to time interpose in, but the present weapon of Positivist energy is intellectual and moral action, & its true field is Opinion. Opinion in all its provinces. There we can commence at once: there we have a boundless field ever before us."[14] This chapter will consider some areas in that "boundless field" where Lushington's altruism led him to take an active interest and where he sought to bring change by influencing public opinion.

Christian Socialism

Christian Socialism was the name adopted for their cause by a group of visionary broad churchman which included F.D. Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and J.M. Ludlow.[15] It was this cause that provided Lushington with his first real opportunity

[14] Lushington, *The State*. Original manuscript in my possession.
[15] Torban Christensen, in the preface to his history of the early Christian Socialist movement, noted that a full, detailed, study of the movement in the years 1848-54 will never be written. Despite Ludlow's careful retention of all the correspondence and papers in connection with the work of

to demonstrate his altruism. Lushington first encountered Christian Socialism in Cambridge through the brothers Alexander and Daniel Macmillan.[16] In July 1842 Daniel Macmillan, after experiencing first hand the terrible physical and spiritual conditions of much of the working population of London, wrote to Julius Hare asking what he thought could be done help these people in what he called their "spiritual perplexity".[17] Hare passed the letter to Maurice who was so impressed by what he read that he decided to give serious thought as to what might be done. Maurice, a frequent visitor to the Macmillans' shop, had been strongly influenced by the writings of Coleridge when he had been a student at Cambridge. Through Maurice's presence in Cambridge, and encouraged by the Macmillan brothers, a number of gifted undergraduates were recruited to help. These included J. Llewelyn Davies, Richard Buckley Litchfield (who was to become Charles Darwin's son in law), John Westlake and, of course, the radical young Lushington.[18] Like Lushington, most of the Christian Socialists were middle-class professional men.[19] In 1854 Charles Kingsley, wrote to the young undergraduate John Martineau urging him to, "Cultivate those Macmillans, they are noble and wise men, and in their shop

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Christian Socialism, and their later deposit in the Working Men's College, they were all disposed of as waste paper by a secretary of the College who did not realise what he was doing.

[16] The Macmillans had first opened a shop at 57 Aldersgate Street in 1843. A few months later they opened a shop at 17 Trinity Street, Cambridge and, in 1845, they moved to 1 Trinity Street. The Cambridge shop quickly became a meeting place for Christian Socialist sympathisers. After Daniel's death in 1857, Alexander opened a branch at 23 Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. Here, each Thursday, he held what were called the "tobacco parliaments" – gatherings of writers, scientists and artists such as Tennyson, Thomas Hughes, T.H. Huxley, and Herbert Spencer. In his diaries A.J. Munby notes Lushington's attendances at many of these meetings.

[17] The Reverend Julius Hare was a classics tutor at Cambridge. He was a world authority on Plato and also one of England's leading German scholars. He later wrote a scholarly biography of John Sterling which was later eclipsed by Carlyle's more famous work on the life of Sterling.

[18] George John Worth, *Macmillan's Magazine, 1859-1907: No Flippancy or Abuse Allowed* (Ashgate Publishing Ltd., 2003).

[19] When Alexander Macmillan's son George published a *Brief Memoir of Alexander Macmillan* in 1908 the epithets included the following from Vernon Lushington, "Pray allow me as an old friend of your father to express the esteem and affectionate regard in which I held him, and my gratitude for his kindness and ever cordial greetings."

you will meet Hort, Brimley, and all the Trinity men who hold with Maurice, and who are not merely customers, but private friends of the Macs."[20]

Although Daniel Macmillan had expressed his concern for the working population of London in the early 1840s, it was not until 1848 and the Chartist demonstration of that year that the Christian Socialists came together as a definable group. Their driving spirit was to see the kingdom of Christ authoritatively expressed in the realms of industry and trade. The Christian Socialists were also deeply concerned about the church's failure to respond to the increasingly urgent social issues of the day, which, together with biblical criticism and Darwin's evolutionary theory, was another factor in the crisis of faith. The need for social action was taken up by the Christian Socialists who recognised that the Church of England must have something more to offer to the working people of England than what its leaders were then saying. As Lushington had written in 1862, and Carlyle before him had said, "not in words but in works; not in saying but in doing." In bringing areas of social concerns into the public domain the Christian Socialists came close to the Positivists. However, the leaders of the movement chose to remain within the fold of the Anglican Church even though at times Comte's Religion of Humanity looked set to take the higher moral ground.

In their mission statement, set out in the first edition of their journal the Christian Socialists stated that Christian socialism recognised the compatibility of Socialism and Christianity, with the former being the contemporary manifestation of the latter.

[20] Kingsley to John Martineau, 9 November 1854. Reproduced in Martineau, p. 22.

The compatibility between them, they proposed, was mutually complementary as any enduring socialist system required, "those grounds of those moral grounds of righteousness, self-sacrifice, mutual affection, and common brotherhood"[21]. The Christian Socialists believed, "That Christianity is too often cramped up with the four walls of its churches or chapels, and forbidden to go forth into the wide world, conquering and to conquer, to assert God's rightful dominion over every process of trade and industry, over every act of our common life, and to embody in due forms of organisation every deepest truth of that faith committed to its charge."[22]

After witnessing the year of revolutions of 1848, the Christian Socialists believed that socialism must be Christianised, or else it would shake Christianity to its foundations. Because of the reluctance of the Church of England to rise to the challenge, the Christian Socialists adopted a number of campaigns commencing with their important contribution to the advancement of education in England. They also encouraged co-operative economic enterprise and they promoted sanitary and public health reforms. Christian Socialism experienced two distinct phases in the nineteenth century – the first being from 1848 until 1854. It was during the latter part of this period that Lushington became involved with the group. At this time Christian Socialism was primarily a social and religious movement and, like the Positivists, its leaders did not see the need for political activity or legislation. Instead they believed that men could be raised from ignorance and social misery through educative and moral methods. It was not new laws that were needed but inspiring hearts and minds.

[21] *The Christian Socialist: A Journal of Association*, No. 1, Vol. 1, November, 1850, p.1.
[22] Ibid.

This was very much in accordance with what Comte had foreseen this when he had written of the need "to exhort the working classes to seek happiness in calling their moral and mental powers into constant exercise and to give them an education." [23]

For a while the divide between Christian Socialism and Comte's Positivism was blurred as they discovered a common goal in the relief of the suffering of the working classes. However, one major point of disagreement arose from the Positivist belief that the division of labour between master and workmen had come to stay, and could support the industrial revolution without any democratic inhibitions. Although Maurice initially expressed only contempt for Comte, by 1868 he came to respect "the Christian aspects of Comtism, deprived though it was of such a Father of the whole Family as Christ revealed, of such a Redeemer and Centre of Humanity as He is."[24] The Christian Socialists respected humanity but, unlike the English Positivists, their service to humanity was always considered an expression of Christian duty and never to humanity for humanity's sake. J.M. Ludlow went so far as to describe Positivism as an evil and dramatically, and untruly, in his dialogue with Godfrey Lushington in *Tracts for Priests and People* he bizarrely accused Comte of kneeling to Humanity beneath Clotilde's amputated arms.[25] Despite this Ludlow and the Lushingtons remained on good terms and, in 1907, when acknowledging a letter of condolence on his brother's death, Lushington wrote "Godfrey always cherished a

[23] Comte, *A General View of Positivism* (1880), p. 203.
[24] F.D. Maurice to Miss Williams Wynn, 29 July 1868 in Frederick Maurice, ed. *The Life and Letters of Frederick Denison Maurice*, (Macmillan and Co., 1885), p.578.
[25] N.C. Masterman, *John Malcolm Ludlow: The Builder of Christian Socialism* (Cambridge, 1963), p.188.

most warm feeling for you and affection of ancient friendship & high esteem. And now comes your tribute to him."[26]

It is not difficult to understand why Lushington was initially drawn to the high ideals and crusading zeal of the Christian Socialists. This was a natural follow-on from the challenge of Thomas Carlyle to put words into action. In the face of every disadvantage, the Christian Socialists placed their resources, both spiritual and intellectual, in the service of the cause they had discovered. At this time Lushington, through his brother and men such as Congreve, was in the early stages of discovering Positivism. There was no real group or agenda through which Positivist ideals could be outworked and Christian Socialism therefore provided him with both an identifiable group with a very practical agenda for his altruistic spirit. Additionally Lushington was, at this time, in the early stages of discovering Comte's Positivism and was beginning to question matters of traditional faith and doctrine. The fact that the Christian Socialists were first and foremost "Christians" soon became a stumbling block and it is likely that it was for this reason that Lushington never became a Christian Socialist *per se* although he chose to work closely with many of those at the heart of the cause in the fight against the common evil. Indeed in writing to Richard Monkton Milnes in 1862 Lushington was happy to describe himself as "a Socialist … tolerably impartial between Whig & Tory".[27] In Lushington's association with the Christian Socialists is found a similar pattern to that of his father who, in the cause of the abolition of slavery, worked closely with

[26] Cambridge University Library, Add 7348/11.
[27] Lushington to Richard Monkton Miles, Lord Houghton. 12 October 1862. Trinity College Library, Cambridge. Houghton 15/113-4.

Wilberforce and the Clapham Sect but never actually joining them. At this time Positivism was still a developing system of belief and Comte's altruism was still very much an ideal with no real practical expression. When the Christian Socialists opened a place of education for working men, Lushington saw this as the ideal means of bringing about change in society. The College also provided an opportunity for the sort of education that Comte had advocated.[28]

The Working Men's College

In January 1854 F.D. Maurice found himself at the centre of a theological dispute relating to the interpretation of matters relating to eternity and hell. As a result he was dismissed from King's College. The Christian Socialists had been considering the establishment of a college for working men and Maurice seemed the ideal candidate for its principal. It was then agreed to found such an establishment in London.[29] When it came to enrolling students for the London College, the Christian Socialists turned, without much success, to the various Trade Unions in order to enlist students from among their members. However, during the last two weeks before the college was due to open, a more intensive campaign was conducted, culminating in a large meeting on 30 October in St. Martin's Hall, where Maurice

[28] Martha Vogeler to David Taylor in correspondence, "I consider the WMC a kind of model for the Positivists centres set up by Comte and his followers in the late 1860s and especially Newton Hall in 1880." Comte advocated clubs for working men which would "form a substitute for the Church of old times, or rather prepare the way for the religious building of the new form of worship, the worship of Humanity." Comte, *A General View of Positivism* (1880), p. 106.

[29] There was a Working Men's College in Cambridge in 1855 but it did not last. Others were set up in Oxford, Manchester, Ancoats, Halifax, Birkenhead and Glasgow among other places.

spoke to an audience of about 1,500 members. The following day the College opened with the admission of no less than 120 students.

The Working Men's College provided Lushington with scope to express not only his vitality, and sociability, and altruism but also his passion particularly for the arts – especially for music. The College was the one place where Christian Socialists and Positivists came together in an uneasy alliance. Lushington's work at the college brought together the principles of Carlyle's work ethic and Comte's altruism. Lushington also gave the College financial support and the College's first annual report, written by Maurice, reveals him has having donated sums totalling £4 in the period up to Christmas 1855. Lushington was always looking to recruit more volunteers to help and Mrs Andrew Crosse later recalled how at parties given by Mrs Barlow, wife of the honorary secretary of the Royal Institution, Lushington would "be looking up volunteer lecturers for the working-men's college, which he and other earnest-minded men had so much at heart.[30]

The syllabus of the College when it was founded comprised four main topics. These were Politics, Science, Language & Literature, and Art which included drawing and modelling. Music, which was not initially included in the syllabus because of the proximity of classes led by J.P. Hullah, was later added under the direction of Richard Litchfield. At the College Lushington taught alongside friends such as George Grove, John Llewelyn Davis and Charles Buxton the son of his father's anti-

[30] Mrs Andrew Crosse *Science and Society in the Fifties* from The Living Age, Vol 191, Issue 2469, 24 October 1891.

slavery co-campaigner Thomas Buxton. He also worked with Ruskin who held painting classes for the men and Rossetti whose teaching commitments at the College linked the social and artistic aspiration of the Pre-Raphaelites. Evidence of Lushington's enthusiasm for the College is found in a letter he wrote, from Cambridge, to his friend Joanna Richardson in 1854.

> Have you up in the North heard of the Working Men's' College? It is now fairly set a going, & with such a staff of professors, or teachers as they wisely call themselves – Maurice, Principal – Fellows of Oxford & Cambridge, lecturers on Mathematics, Mechanics, Grammar & I know not what - & Ruskin – the great Ruskin, drawing master! A very noble devotion I think on his part. He is going to start with colours, water colours at once & he has something like 20 pupils to begin with – may there be a developable genius among them – Successful or not, the project is a grand one, and must be good. Pray wish for its prosperity.[31]

Fortunately the paucity of correspondence for this period in the Lushington archive is more than compensated by the fulsome diaries of his friend, and fellow Trinity graduate, Arthur Munby. Munby, who is perhaps best remembered now for his obsessive and questionable interest in the physical appearance of working class women, taught a Latin class at the College and his diaries contain many references to his friend Lushington for whom he had a very high regard. College management

[31] Lushington to Joanna Richardson. NLS MS 3990 ff 177-180. Undated by Lushington but a later hand has pencilled on this letter "Advent 1854".

meetings often took place at the home of Macmillan and, at one such meeting on 3 March 1859 with Litchfield, Furnivall and Lushington present, Furnivall expressed that he wanted to read Mill on Liberty with his class at the Working Men's' College. Maurice objected because he considered it "a contemporary book on an unsettled question". When this developed into a heated discussion on "Geology and Genesis" it was "Vernon mediating in his clear earnest way" who brought concord. [32] Although Darwin's publications upset many conventional Anglicans, the Christian Socialists welcomed his findings as means of removing what they considered to be superstitious notions about God.[33] In 1860, Munby recorded meeting Lushington at the College where together they "went upstairs to the drawing class, and found Ruskin talking with Litchfield – telling him of a letter of sympathy which he has had from Carlyle, in reference to his articles on political economy in the Cornhill."[34]

In a highly descriptive diary entry of 1862, Munby recorded how Lushington had spoken at a General Meeting of the College. "Next Vernon Lushington was called for and spoke best of all. Indeed his frank and artless bearing, his mellow voice and far-looking eyes, and the manly gentle earnestness of his words and manner, must always be captivating. There is in him a combination of womanly pathos with the strong sincerity of manhood of which I never saw the like."[35] The perceptive Munby notes this blending of "womanly pathos" and "sincerity of manhood" which are

[32] Derek Hudson, *Munby Man of Two Worlds, The Life and Diaries of Arthur J. Munby 1828-1910* (John Murray, 1972), p. 26.
[33] Colloms, p. 180.
[34] A.J. Munby, Diary, 8 November 1860. Trinity College, Cambridge.
[35] Ibid. 22 November 1862.

striking attributes of Lushington's character and which were demonstrated in his artistic side with his love of painting and poetry.

Lushington's mediating skills were recorded again by Munby the following year when he described another meeting of the College Council at which Lushington was present. In an innovative and democratic stance the College encouraged the involvement of students on the governing body. Three new student members, present for the first time at a meeting, proposed new rules which would result in it being swamped by students who would become permanent members like the teachers. This resulted in Maurice "losing not indeed his temper but his judgement", declaring himself no longer President and the College at an end. Hughes, Ludlow and Furnivall all joined in a very heated discussion. Again it was left to Lushington, the moderator, to try and calm things down.[36] In 1862 Ruskin had given his farewell lecture to the College. After the lecture Lushington and Munby walked down to the Temple together "talking of what we had heard and especially that back handed blow to Christianity conveyed in the maxim about religion and ethics. Vernon thought, with his usual kindness, that Ruskin should not have spoken so freely before the students, lest haply the faith of some students should be disturbed or wounded: and if they did see all the purport of his speech, I should say so too."[37]

Lushington's professional engagements meant that there were times when he was not available to take his class. On such occasions he would enlist the help of friends

[36] Ibid. 28 May 1863.
[37] Ibid. 29 November 1862.

like Furnivall, to whom he wrote on one occasion explaining how his class should be taken in his absence. It is reproduced here in full:

> Dear Furnivall,
>
> If I were able to take my class on Thursday evening, I should proceed as follows,
>
> - First, I should dictate the first four stanzas of Tennyson's 'You ask me why, so ill at ease'. Then I should dictate my questions to be answered on the following evening, i.e. the annexed paper, headed June 24.
>
> This done, I should proceed to read slowly & clearly the text from page 19 onwards say to page 27 – interspersing questions & remarks, & explaining the derivation & exact meaning of the words asked in the last of my questions.
>
> All this would probably occupy the time until a little past nine o'clock. I should then hand the Book over to the class for each in turn to con over again the part I had read aloud. Meanwhile I should look over the paper work of the last time with each of the students in succession.
>
> I should examine & correct the dictation, it was a piece from the Brother (Wordsworth, Vol. 1) & then do the like with the answers to the questions, rebuking, exhorting, praising. My wishes that they should answer the questions in their own words & their own way, using them, if they like by way of suggestion only.

> To one of the students, Strickland, I gave questions on English history at his desire. The friend who takes the class for me might give him any questions he liked, or leave it for me to do next time; & in short he had better use his own choice whether to follow my plan, or adopt one of his own, carry over all next Thursday's work to the week after.
>
> Yours affectly.
>
> Vernon Lushington.[38]

This letter demonstrates Lushington's meticulous attention to detail over the classes which he took and the high standards he expected. A former College pupil, John MacDonald, wrote of Lushington, "He was always pleasant, patient and kind, but he would not allow any slovenly work to pass. He required precision in every demonstration. To be in his company an hour or two each week added perceptibly to one's education." MacDonald then adds an observation which sheds light on Lushington's views on J.S. Mill. On telling Lushington he had decided to read Mill's "Logic", he responded, almost in a pleading voice, "Oh, don't, don't read that!" [39]

Lushington's concern for the welfare of his pupils often went beyond the classroom and Thomas Hughes recalled a particular act of generosity shown to a brush maker named Hurst:

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[38] Lushington to Furnivall (undated). The Huntington Library, California. FU 521-27.

[39] MacDonald's Appreciation of Lushington in the Working Men's College Journal, Vol. XII, No. 227, July 1912, p. 375. Mill described Positivism as "the most consistent system of spiritual and temporal despotism which ever yet emanated from a human brain, unless possibly that of Ignatius Loyola." See Dixon p. 71.

> [His] outward man was in no way pleasing, indeed much the reverse. He had a long, slight figure, which he sadly neglected in the matter of clothing, wearing such ragged garments, when he came to matriculate, that our first secretary, himself a working watchmaker and strong radical, had doubts whether he should allow him to enter. His hair was long and rough, and he had lost most of his front teeth, and he had a sallow complexion and a ragged thin beard. In short, a more forlorn figure it would be hard to find in Ratcliffe highway or Whitechapel. No man had ever more external disadvantages to contend against, and no man ever lived them down in less time. He was soon one of the most popular members of the social gatherings for tea and talk, which we held after the college classes closed at ten, in the common room.

Lushington took Hurst under his wing not only as a student but also assisting him financially when he started up a small shop manufacturing and selling hair brushes.[40] Unfortunately Hurst became the victim of his own standards of professional perfection by making such good brushes that they never wore out. Hughes used to joke that his increasing baldness was due to Hurst's tough hair brushes.[41] This personal interest in pupils was extended to social occasions and, in another letter to Furnivall, written from Liverpool, Lushington, after reminding his friend to take class in his absence, adds that, it being the last class, he would have invited all the class "to tea in Doctors Commons".[42] This practice of inviting pupils to their homes exercised by many of those who taught at the College was an unusual example in

[40] Thomas Hughes, *Early Memories For The Children* (T. Burleigh, 1899), pp. 62-64.
[41] Brenda Colloms, *Victorian Visionaries*, (Constable 1982), p. 171.
[42] Lushington to Furnivall, 20 July 1858. The Huntington Library, California. FU 521-27.

those days of middle class professional men mixing on equal social terms with working men. After Lushington's marriage his work at the College was one area which he could share with his wife, who often accompanied to College events such as those held at 'Birdshurst', the Croydon home of a wealthy banker named Robson. Munby records several of these excursions at which both the Lushingtons were present. In 1869 Munby went to the College for the New Year's Party and recorded that Vernon Lushington "just made a Q.C." was present and "Mrs V.L. played the piano."[43] The following year Munby went to the College to see the "new building". "Vernon Lushington and his wife were there, singing away heartily with the students." However, Munby observed, "Godfrey and his wife [were] sitting critical and somewhat apart."[44] Following Lushington's death a former pupil at the College commented "Personally I owe him a great debt for teaching me to love poetry and the arts of music, painting, and sculpture, which are now such a true source of enjoyment to me."[45] Lushington continued his work at the College for many years and, after Maurice's death in 1872, he assisted in the voluntary winding up of the Working Men's College Company and the creation in 1874 of the Working Men's College Corporation, of which he was a trustee.[46]

[43] Munby, 1869.
[44] Ibid. 7 January 1870.
[45] The Positivist Review.
[46] Lushington joined Charles Kingsley, Thomas Hughes and hundreds of others at Maurice's funeral service which was led by Llewelyn Davies and Dean Stanley. *The Working Men's College* pp. 31-33.

The Trade Unions

The years between 1859 and 1861 marked an important phase in British working-class life in the coming of age of the trade union movement. This was precipitated by the builders' strike which aroused wide public attention and was responsible for bringing the union leader Robert Applegarth to the fore. Lushington was drawn into active support of the trade union movement through his involvement first with the Christian Socialists and then Working Men's College. He was called to the bar in 1857 and soon found that he was able to use put his legal skills to good use in this particular cause.[47] Both Vernon and Godfrey Lushington were enlisted into helping the Unions by Frederic Harrison, who had also chosen the law for his career. Sidney and Beatrice Webb wrote about "the talented young barristers and literary men, who from this time forward, became the trusted legal experts and political advisors of the Trade Union Movement."[48]

In August 1861 Lushington wrote to H.G. Seeley, "The Builders Strike has been a great interest to my brother & me, lately. You have seen perhaps his letters in the *Times* (signed by him, Hughes & Ludlow)… We are wholly for the men, we want to preserve for them their hours of leisure, the master's real aim is to increase the hours of work, & a deformed economic science says Work, work – what do I care for

[47] Lushington took silk in 1868 and the following year he became a "Bencher". In 1877 he was appointed a County Court Judge a position which he held until 1900.
[48] Sidney & Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (Reprinted) (Augustus M. Kelley, New York 1965), Chapter 5, p. 247.

leisure & human enjoyment."[49] This strike resulted from a labour demand for a nine hour day. The workmen had totally failed to make clear their objection to the Hour System, or even to obtain a hearing for their case. They needed legal expertise and found this freely provided by the Lushingtons, Harrison and others who were willing to take up their cause. The letters were signed by a mixture of Christian Socialists and Positivists thereby demonstrating how these two vastly differing philosophies could find common expression in a matter of social concern. As a result of this episode the Lushington brothers, together with Harrison, were invited to sit on a sub-committee set up by the newly formed National Society for the Promotion of Social Science to examine trade union activities.[50] The Positivists were joined on this committee by the Christian Socialists Thomas Hughes and J.M. Ludlow.

The group expressed a particular interest in the "New Model Unions" of the skilled workers. Robert Applegarth, one of the new breed of union leaders, was friendly with Ludlow and kept him supplied with material for articles and speeches in which Ludlow put the case for organised labour. A radically minded Liberal, Applegarth was at the centre of all the political and industrial issues of the 1860s. His main activity towards the end of that decade was to do with the legal status of trade unions. Through their active support of Applegarth they hoped to win middle-class Radicals, men like W.E. Foster, who was already friendly with the Christian

[49] Lushington to Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 8 August 1861.
[50] 26 August 1868, Vernon to Jane Lushington from Liverpool: "I have just written a long letter to Harrison about my Trade Union paper. How I wish it was done, how I long to do it & get it done. It will haunt me even in Switzerland. I can't explain to you what a long, difficult business it is, something like writing the history of England."

Socialists.[51] A lesser known and more technical contribution by Ludlow and the others was in the field of protective legislation. Although this work on behalf of the trade unions successfully brought Christian Socialists and Positivists together, there were tensions created both by differences of opinion concerning tactics and by the fact that the two groups were "proselytising for rival faiths".[52] Ludlow, whose dislike of Comte has already been noted, was alternatively pleased and frustrated in his dealings with the Positivists. He regretted their negative side. Of course they took no interest in co-operatives, whether producer or consumer. Neither did they place much store in democracy, seeing nothing wrong in the divisions of labour into employers and workers. The Positivists were, Ludlow concluded, good men who were trying to construct a moral doctrine upon scientific principles, with the result that their so called "religion", in the final analysis, was cold. It did not suit Ludlow, but then nothing much did, and he remained in the shelter of the comfortably vague Anglican Church, calling himself a dissenter within the Church.

Ten years after the London builders' strike, the American author of *A Positivist Primer* praised his English brethren for their participation in the Parliamentary Commission set up to enquire into the working of the unions. He singled out Harrison in particular stating that "Workingmen of a future generation will canonize [him] for what he done for the labouring class of England."[53] Royden Harrison later wrote, "In so far as a small society of intellectuals can ever be credited with great

[51] A. W. Humphrey, *Robert Applegarth. Trade Unionist Reformer*, (Manchester: Net Labour Press, 1913), p. 40.
[52] Masterman, pp. 186-7.
[53] *A Positivist Primer* p. 111.

changes, the credit for the legal emancipation of Trade Unionism belongs to them [the Positivists]… Although the Positivists reiterated their faith in moral rather than in political remedies, they were far ahead of their contemporaries in their attitudes towards State Regulations of economic activity."[54]

"Cousin V" and the Manchester Cotton Operatives

In 1862 Lushington's concern for the plight of the working classes led him and his brother into a very practical demonstration by assisting the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell in her relief work for the cotton operatives of Manchester and the surrounding area. The American civil war had resulted in cutting off supplies of raw cotton on which the local dominant industry, the means of livelihood for a great number of people, almost entirely depended. A relief fund was set up but the stringent rules made to control the fund led to rioting in Manchester and other cities. Godfrey Lushington and Frederic Harrison were sent to investigate while Vernon Lushington undertook to collect funds in London which he sent on to Mrs Gaskell for distribution in Manchester. It is more than likely that Lushington was behind the relief fund that was set up at the Working Men's College.[55]

A series of eight letters, believed to have been written between 1862 and 1865, from Mrs Gaskell to Lushington has survived and been published in the collected letters

[54] Royden Harrison, *Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics, 1861-1881* (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals 1994), p. 305.
[55] J. Llewellyn Davies (ed.), *The Working Men's College, 1854 – 1904. Records of its History and its Work for Fifty Years, By Members of the College* (Macmillan & Co. Ltd. 1904) pp. 95-97.

of Mrs Gaskell. These letters reveal the strong friendship which developed between Mrs Gaskell and him whom she called "Cousin V", indicating her preference for him over Godfrey, who was just "Mr G.L." [56] The relationship between Mrs Gaskell and the Lushingtons was undoubtedly helped by a close tie between their families which appears to have started in the previous generation. [57] In a letter to his daughter Alice, written on 20 June 1862, Stephen Lushington reported that Vernon was giving a breakfast that morning at which Mrs Gaskell was to be present. In 1865 Mrs Gaskell introduced Lushington to Alfred Waterhouse the architect of the new Assize Courts in Manchester who then took them both on a tour of the new buildings."[58] When Waterhouse told them that he intended to have the motto "Thou shalt not bear false witness" on the wall of the building, Lushington suggested as an alternative "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" and this was taken up by Waterhouse. The relationship with the Gaskell family continued after Elizabeth's death in 1865 and Lushington continued to visit her husband and daughters. Eventually he introduced his own daughters to the Gaskell girls, thereby taking the friendship into the next generation.[59]

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[56] There has been some uncertainty as to the date of the published letters but this can now be confirmed by a letter which Lushington wrote from Liverpool to H.G. Seeley. In this Lushington writes, "I have been here off & on for the last three weeks on Assize business. I have had great pleasure in bettering my acquaintance with Mrs Gaskell (authoress of Mary Barton) & her family. I have spent three Sundays with them, & I think of going for a fourth." Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 11 April 1862.

[57] In 1853 Elizabeth Gaskell had written to her daughter Marianne "Mr Vernon Lushington brought his sister Alice to tea last night, promiscuous, i.e. uninvited." In 1861 Mrs Gaskell, in a letter to Catherine Winkworth, mentions that she had met Vernon Lushington at a concert at Exeter Hall and he introduced her to his aunt "Miss Carr, well known to *my* Aunts in other days, when Hollands & Carrs were near neighbours." Vernon's aunt invited Mrs Gaskell to visit the family at Ockham but it is not known whether this invitation was taken up.

[58] Vernon to Jane Lushington. Thursday, 23 February 1865. SHC 7857/Box3/1.

[59] In 1866, after Mrs Gaskell's death, her daughter Meta wrote to Alice Lushington, "I always think of you as one whom Mama valued and regarded most truly and affectionately." Letter in my

Lushington and Waterhouse were brought together again in 1864. In that year there were a series of strikes in the building industry in Manchester. Waterhouse became involved in it through his work as the architect of the new County Gaol in Manchester and was asked by the builders to mediate on their behalf. Lushington asked Waterhouse for a written account of the events and his lengthy and detailed reply was published as a small booklet the following year.[60] This account reveals how Lushington himself got involved by travelling to Liverpool to hear the men's' grievances. The builders had turned against Waterhouse accusing him of allowing shoddy workmanship. The builders were able to influence the contractors and Waterhouse found it impossible to obtain further commissions in Manchester. In concluding the letter Waterhouse wrote to Lushington:

> I have not, however, ventured to trouble you with this long story, simply as one of the most unjustifiable hardship inflicted on myself, but because I conceive it may have a certain importance in the history of the Trades' Unions … Co-operation now-a-days, is in the ascendant. It is of the last importance that its enormous resources should be directed to legitimate ends. What men individually would hesitate to do, many men acting together seem to feel no shame in doing; but all those who wish well to Trade Unions should desire them to avoid proceedings damaging their own interests as

possession. The Lushington archive contains a number of other letters from Mrs Gaskell's daughters to members of the Lushington family.

[60] Alfred Waterhouse, *A Chapter in the History of Strikes: Being a Letter to Vernon Lushington, Esq., Barrister-at-Law* (Manchester, 1865).

those which the Manchester Union of Bricklayers has seen fit to adopt against.[61]

This letter, and the events it recounted, highlighted the problems in the development of the Trade Union movement. These were problems of which Lushington would have been only too aware with his desire to help in areas of social injustice clashing with the ideologies of Positivism which did not believe in co-operatives or democracy.

Charles Booth

Charles Booth was a wealthy ship owner whose monumental work *The Life and Labours of the People of London* became a model for the Fabian tracts. His work was also used by a man who shared his surname namely William Booth of the Salvation Army in his book *In Darkest London* published in 1890. It was through the work of the London Positivists that Charles Booth became aware of the plight of the poor of London and felt challenged to take up their cause.[62] It is quite likely that Lushington first met Booth in Liverpool where he spent a good deal of time as a barrister on the Northern Circuit in the 1860s. It was there that Lushington met several other leading ship owners and industrialists who were collectors of works of art from the Pre-Raphaelite school. Additionally Booth was related to several

[61] Ibid. pp. 21-22.
[62] Jose Harris, "Charles Booth", Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.

Positivists such as the Cromptons and Edward Beesly. In 1871 Booth married Mary Catherine Macaulay, a niece of Lord Macaulay.

Booth lost his faith following the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species*.[63] He was, like Lushington, a radical Liberal but his experience of electioneering in Toxteth in the 1860s left him with a lifelong distaste for organised democratic politics. Booth found himself drawn towards Positivism and although he never felt able to join the Church of Humanity, the systematic and practical study of social organisation offered by the Positivists inspired him for work in that field. The Lushington archive reveals the close friendship that existed between Lushington and Booth and their respective families. Susan Lushington's diary records the Booths and their daughter staying with the Lushingtons at Pyports in November 1892. Lushington with his own deep passion for social justice must have seen Booth as a kindred spirit and, in his usual manner, no doubt offered interest and support in the work which Booth undertook – a further example of Lushington's ability to bring about social change through influence.

"The Lights of Liberalism"

In 1886 Matthew Arnold observed that despite his warning given some fifteen years earlier to his "young literary and intellectual friends, the lights of Liberalism, not to be rushing into the arena of politics themselves" this was exactly what many of them had done and with very little result. Arnold could almost be mistaken for a Positivist

[63] Ibid.

when he argued that they should "work inwardly upon the predominant force in our politics – the great middle class - and to cure its spirit."[64] By chance Arnold and Lushington became neighbours and friends when they both chose to live in the Surrey village of Cobham, some twenty miles from London. The diaries of Lushington's daughter, Susan, reveal that the two families were often in each other's houses. Despite his loss of traditional belief, Arnold continued to attend services at Cobham church. Regrettably nothing has survived of what passed between Arnold and Lushington, but it is difficult to believe that their conversation did not touch upon the question of religious belief and, despite Arnold's rejection of Positivism, he cannot but have admired Lushington, who had rejected the path of politics and chosen to "work inwardly" to cure the spirit of the "great middle class" through his adoption of the Religion of Humanity with its central doctrine of altruism.[65]

Comte believed in the principle of the subordination of politics to morality. For the English Positivists political activity meant exerting their influence where possible both by the spoken or written word and in the 1860s and 70s they expressed their views on national and international affairs in a number of areas as well as their opposition to imperialism and the British Empire. Earlier, in 1856 and 1857, Congreve had argued for the return of Gibraltar and the British withdrawal from

[64] Matthew Arnold, "The Nadir of Liberalism", *The Nineteenth Century*, vol. xix May 1886.
[65] Bernard Bergonzi in *A Victorian Wanderer. The Life of Thomas Arnold the Younger* (Oxford University Press, 2003) neatly summarizes Arnold's faith, or lack of it, as follows. "It is not easy to know what Matthew Arnold really believed, but anguish over the retreat of traditional faith is powerfully expressed in 'Dover Beach'; he came to think that the poetry of religion should be preserved and its theological doctrines surrendered, whilst maintaining the Church of England as an essential pillar of state; it was desirable to go to church, but it not matter very much what you believed when you got there." This could well be said of Lushington although his church attendance was less regular than that of Arnold's.

India. In 1872, prompted by a speech made by Disraeli on sanitation, the Positivists drew up their own programme of reforms. This included an eight-hour working day, working class housing, free education, and public transport, parks, and libraries. However, as Vogeler points out, "it was an example of Positivism's utopianism, because these concerns were to come about through a growing concern for Humanity" and not through political agencies.[66]

In the area of international concern there were three particular episodes in which Lushington took an active role and it is appropriate to include them in this chapter on altruism since they demonstrate his concern for humanity on the wider scene. Following Comte's strictures concerning political activity, Lushington believed that "Society is much more than Government, immeasurably more, change in the form of Government does not make new Society."[67] Society was best changed not by onslaughts from the outside but by gentle persuasion and emerging new ideas. Lushington graphically explained this - "What brings the old leaves off the Trees every year? Rain, frost, tempest? Yes- but more than these the thrust of the new shoots."[68] It would be by influence that change would come about and Lushington sought to influence the decision makers by writing letters and expressing his views in appropriate circles.

[66] Vogeler p. 116.
[67] Lushington *The State*, 14 April 1889. Manuscript in my possession.
[68] Ibid.

The Governor Eyre Controversy

Before turning to the three situations on which we do have Lushington's views, and in which he took action, there is another further episode which requires consideration. This is Governor Eyre Controversy of 1865. It was an event which brought the British attitude to the black population of the West Indies into sharp focus and one in which Lushington would have taken a keen interest especially after his support for Thomas Carlyle's extreme views on this subject in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* in 1856.

The episode concerned Governor Eyre of Jamaica and his attempt to forestall what he believed would be a bloody insurrection. The man he considered to be a ring leader was hanged and hundreds of blacks were murdered and flogged. Eyre's actions received the support of Carlyle, Dickens, Kingsley, Tennyson, Ruskin and Froude. However Frederic Harrison severely condemned what he considered to be Eyre's excessive brutal action and, as a member of the Jamaica Committee, he worked under J.S. Mill's leadership to bring Eyre to trial. A Royal Commission investigating the case praised Eyre's 'promptitude and vigour' while conceding that the penalties he had imposed were excessive. Behind Mill were to be found many of those involved in the anti-slavery campaign such as the Buxtons and Stephens who were close friends of the Lushingtons. Others supporting Mill were Darwin, Huxley, Herbert Spencer, A.V. Dicey and Thomas Hughes. This was the circle in which Lushington moved and where he had, perhaps with the exception of Huxley, developed strong friendships. There is no record of Lushington's views on this

incident but it is unlikely that he would not have supported the Committee, thereby distancing himself from his earlier support for Carlyle. The Positivists were opposed to what they considered "expensive, pre-emptive, and hypocritical foreign policy."[69]

But the Positivists were not just concerned about the events in the West Indies. They also believed that the way in which the episode had been handled could create a serious precedent for events nearer home such as the agitation for Home Rule in Ireland and the struggle for Parliamentary reform and the widening of the franchise. In addition there were other areas of international concern in which Lushington and his fellow positivists made clear their views.

The Franco Prussian War

Five years after the Eyre Controversy France declared war on Prussia. France had viewed with apprehension the increasing unification of the German-states led by the Chancellor Otto von Bismarck and when the throne of Spain was offered to a Prussian prince, France protested successfully but went on to make further demands which Prussia refused. Bismarck published the Ems dispatch which inflamed French feeling and led to the outbreak of hostilities. Inevitably, and because of their respect for Comte and their close association with the French positivists, the English positivists' sympathies lay with the French.

[69] Thomas Dixon, *The Invention of Altruism. Making Moral Meanings in Victorian Britain*, (The British Academy 2008), p. 215.

In August 1870 Lushington wrote to his wife, “How wondrously interesting is each fresh Report of the War News – I have certainly never felt the like. So mighty & so rapid the changes, & all so near too. Those who remember the year 1848 may have something of the same feeling, but I was a boy then, in the Indian Seas.” Godfrey Lushington was in Switzerland at this time and was thinking of returning via Paris. Concerned for his brother’s safety, Vernon had written to him warning him not to enter Paris, “No one wd. take him for a French man; & ergo, the Paris Mob will say, ergo he is a Prussian.” Lushington chose to visit Richard Congreve to discuss the war. Congreve was “just bringing out a short pamphlet” on the war. A few days later Lushington paid another visit to Congreve taking with him Richard Litchfield. There they “discussed France, Prussia, England & all manner of things with him & his female disciples. Litchfield held his own as usual – not to be put down by any High Priest whatsoever.” On the 26 August Lushington wrote to his wife from London, “All day long one’s thoughts are of the War, & of the tremendous destinies of the French People. I read all the Papers & have ordered the Journal de Debats for the next 3 months, that I may see with my own eyes something of what they are saying in Paris.”[70] The following day Lushington “walked to Chelsea & called on Rossetti & Carlyle, but found neither. Rossetti was out, & the old sage, chuckling I suppose at Prussian Victories, was in Scotland.”

Although the English Positivists generally supported France, Lushington, ever the peacemaker, wrote to his wife after the Battle of Sedan: “The more I think of it, the more tremendous in import seems this event. I cannot look upon it quite with the

[70] Vernon to Jane Lushington , 27 August 1870. SHC 7854/Box 3/7.

eyes of my Positivist Friends, but I trust it may be the commencement of a more pacific era than Europe has known." [71]

Lushington again expressed his earnest desire for peace when he wrote to his wife on the 7 September, "I am not without hope that the War may be coming to an end. Such evidently was the wish & hope of the King of Prussia & Bismarck, - after Sedan Battle, for they tried to negotiate with the Emperor. I see signs of it also in Paris. In the leading article of the Temps, in the address of the Working Men's Association, & (if that can be credited) the actual overtures by Jules Favre. Should France give up her standing army, what a blessing to her & to Europe. But is that possible? And will not Bismarck require money indemnity & Strasburg, & will France consent to this? All seems impossible & yet not so. Earnestly I hope for peace."[72] This seems a far cry from Lushington's bullish approach to war with Russia in the Crimea some twenty years earlier.

The following month Lushington wrote to his wife, "What an utter inconsistency is War with out modern civilisation. Here I have subscribed to the great Fund to succour the sick & wounded & the result, or one of the results is, I am helping the Germans to prosecute a siege which I condemn & detest."[73] This same month Lushington visited Congreve whose "notion appears to be that France is really gathering herself for a great effort which will be quite successful in the end,

[71] Vernon to Jane Lushington , 6 September 1870. SHC 7854/Box3/7.
[72] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 7 September 1870. SHC7854/Box3/7.
[73] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 7 October 1870. SHC7854/Box3/7.

howsoever many disasters intervene. She must have time - as the Northerners in the recent Civil War in America."[74]

The Dreyfus Affair

Nearly twenty five years after the Franco-Prussian war, Lushington was drawn into another issue of national and international concern – the Dreyfus Affair. This episode concerned the conviction for treason of a French Officer in 1894. Dreyfus, a wealthy Alsatian Jew, was court-martialled for allegedly passing secret French documents to the Germans. The matter flared up again in 1896 and became a matter of public debate when evidence came to light that Dreyfus had been wrongly convicted. The issue was taken up by the French writer Emile Zola, who published an open letter which contained accusations of both the judges and the French government. Zola was tried for libel and sentenced to jail but escaped to England. By this time the case had become a major political issue drawing comment from outside France. Even Queen Victoria felt obliged to write to her Prime Minister Lord Salisbury in 1899, "I am too horrified for words at this monstrous horrible sentence against the poor martyr Dreyfus. If only all Europe would express its horror and indignation."[75]

[74] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 4 October 1871. SHC7854/Box3/7.
[75] Queen Victoria to Lord Salisbury, 9 September 1899. Quoted in Robert Tombs, *'Lesser Breeds without the Law: The British Establishment and the Dreyfus Affair, 1894-1899'* in The Historical Journal, 41, 2, 1998.

On 13 October 1898 *The Times* published a long letter to the editor – the longest letter it has ever carried – from Vernon's brother (by then Sir) Godfrey Lushington in which he analysed the case disposing of all the evidence against Dreyfus.[76] Beesly took the matter up in the *Positivist Review* and Swinny spoke from the platform at Newton Hall. All considered Dreyfus as a victim of a conspiracy by the military. Lushington of course took a close interest in the case and, on 12 September 1899, wrote to his daughter Susan, "Tomorrow Zola will open fire with his great guns. It will be deeply interesting. How I wish I understood French law & knew what the French Government could do. They have a fearful responsibility upon them." The following day he wrote again to Susan, "I spent the morning reading the papers – I may say drinking the blood of my enemies. Never since the day of Hildebran has there been such a banning – Wrath & contempt have poured in from all the corners of the earth. I am against the Boycott for several reasons, especially because there have been & are such excellent Frenchmen. I intend to sign the Daily Chronicle's address to Mme. Dreyfus. It expressed what I most wanted to say, & gives as little offence as may be. A day of reckoning will come for the scoundrels. Meanwhile France can no longer plead ignorance. If the people do not stir in all legitimate ways, they will become sharers in the crime".[77] Five days later he wrote to Susan, "Dreyfus's Release is a great step forward." Lushington continued to write to Susan about the Dreyfus affair over the next few

[76] The claim for this being the longest letter is in *The Times* 14 January 1985. Godfrey also wrote on the Dreyfus affair in the *National Review*. See Vogeler p. 235.
[77] Vernon to Susan Lushington, 15 September 1899 "I have signed the Chronicle's Address to Mme Dreyfus. Some of you might sign it too. Perhaps you noticed that it was altered 'in response to the suggestion of a distinguished public man' – I was not that individual. SHC 7854/Box11/2

days but then, on 23 September 1899, he added "But now Trans Vaal is on us, & I fear War."

"This Trans Vaal business"

The final area of international concern on which we have Lushington's views is the South African or Boer War. Admittedly opposition to this war came from a wide-ranging circle of intellectuals, not all of whom were necessarily Positivists. However, Lushington's views consistently reflected a view on imperialism and empire that the London Positivist Committee had been promoting for some years.[78] Harrison set out this view in an article in The Positivist Review. His opening words were, "As I write there seems a serious danger that our country may be dragged into a war as iniquitous and as pregnant with evil as any waged within this century."[79] Lushington was strongly opposed to the war in South Africa and, like many others, he laid the blame for the problems squarely with Cecil Rhodes. He wrote to his daughter Susan, "So far as I understand it, I think it is a shameful business – a plan to pick a quarrel with Kruger & annex his country and Rhodes seems to be at the bottom of it all." Just a few days later he wrote, "I can't understand how

[78] In 1885 the London Positivist Committee had heavily criticised colonial expansion. "The story of the constant wars and the perpetual pressure by which the Empire is extended in all parts of the earth is one which in our eyes adds neither honour nor security to our nation. The cause of true civilisation gains neither at home not in the scene of these new acquisitions. The native races are crushed or demoralised, our rivals are perpetually irritated, and our home civilisation is disturbed by a system of aggrandisement which is justified by no superior morality, and which stimulates amongst ourselves the pride and the desire of wealth." *Newton Hall, London Positivist Committee, Report for the Year 1885* p. 9. (Musée la Maison d'Auguste Comte, Paris).

[79] Harrison, "England and the Transvaal", *The Positivist Review*, 1 September 1899. Malcolm Quinn, who then led the Church of Humanity in Newcastle on Tyne, also wrote and published an essay on "England and the Transvaal", 29 September 1899. In a postscript to this tract, Quin denounced British action as "one of the most shameless wars in which a great nation has ever engaged." (Musée la Maison d'Auguste Comte, Paris).

Chamberlain & Milnes, much less Salisbury & the Duke of Devonshire, can suffer his (Rhodes') yoke." On the 16 February 1900 Lushington wrote to his daughter Susan, "Today has come the news 'Kimberley relieved by France.' I feel a pang of disappointment: I shd. like Rhodes to have been caught by the Boers. That happy catastrophe will never happen, I fear."[80] One fierce opponent of the war was Lushington's friend, the liberal politician L.T. Hobhouse. In an undated letter Lushington wrote that he had dined at Merton College as the guest of Hobhouse. "It was a pleasant little party, but I could not get much talk with good Hobhouse himself, as I had to talk to the Warden &c." However we are to walk together on Sunday afternoon, if all be well."[81]

The foundations which Carlyle and Comte had laid in Lushington's life in the mid-1850s underpinned a constructive, altruistic, care for humanity that formed the core of his being. Choosing not to enter the political arena, Lushington followed what Arnold had called the need to "work inwardly upon the predominant force in our politics – the great middle class - and to cure its spirit." But this cure of the spirit was not just to be found in matters related to national and international affairs it was also to be found in Lushington's particular passion for the arts – painting, literature and music and it is his contribution to this world in the second half of the nineteenth century that will be considered next.

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[80] Vernon to Susan Lushington, 16 February 1900. SHC 7854/Box11/3.

[81] Vernon to Kitty Lushington, 4 October SHC 7854 (no year – but written on a visit to William Morris at Kelmscott Manor). In this same letter Lushington writes of a conversation with George Brodrick, Warden of Merton College, in which the matters of strikes was raised. Broderick considered it wrong for outsiders to provide financial assistance to either side. Lushington wrote, "This was too much for meek & circumspect me: & I think I did a little shake him on the point, at any rate I showed him there were two opinions upon it."

- 7 -

"Art … a priestly function" [1]

Sometime during the last half of the nineteenth century the Russian-American social reformer and Positivist William Frey wrote and published a short pamphlet entitled the "Cardinal Dogmas of the Religion of Humanity".[2] A copy of this publication found its way to Lushington who responded with a lengthy letter to Frey taking him to task over a number of issues which he believed Frey had misunderstood, including the place of "Affection" and "Art" in Comte's new religion. Lushington wrote to Frey:

> Again, you have no statement in terms of the supremacy of Affection over the Intellect as well as the Practical Energies.
>
> Again you take no notice of Art, which because of its affectionate office Comte finally ranks above Science.[3]

While the Religion of Humanity was founded upon empirical fact, it also held the highest place for art and emotion within its system. Positivism was a 'religion of the heart … the most emotional of all religions' in its hagiolatry and elaborate ritual.[4]

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[1] This line, which neatly encapsulates both Comte and Lushington's understanding of the role of Art within the Religion of Humanity, is taken from Lushington's additional notes referred to later in this chapter.

[2] A copy of this undated pamphlet is in the La Maison d' Auguste Comte, Paris. For more on Frey see Vogeler p. 171.

[3] Lushington to Frey, 8 July (no year). New York Public Library. William Frey papers.

[4] P. 520, Gillis J. Harp, "The Church of Humanity": New York's Worshipping Positivists, *Church History, Vol. 60. No.4 (Dec., 1991)* 508-523 (p. 520).

Comte held that the arts "provided the people with a source of moral inspiration, encouraged social ties, and strengthened the reigning philosophical system."[5] Wright comments that for Comte, "Science could explain fact but art beautified it, cultivating our sense of perfection."[6] Lushington believed that the purpose of art was more than just beautifying fact, for him it had a deeper spiritual function as he explained in a lecture given to the London Positivists:

> Positivism therefore naturally provided a higher function for Art than any former Regime. It regards Art as a specifically religious function, even priestly function.[7]

Such was the importance of art to Comte that he claimed that, "The regeneration of society will be incomplete until Art has been fully incorporated into the modern order." [8] Given Comte's stress on the importance of the arts it is surprising that it has tended to be overlooked in most modern studies of Positivism although Wernick writes, "Comte's aesthetic theory deserves much more attention than I am able to give here."[9]

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[5] Pickering, Vol. 1, p. 640
[6] Wright, p. 38.
[7] Lushington, *Art*. Original manuscript in my possession.
[8] Ibid.
[9] A. Wernick, *Auguste Comte and the Religion of Humanity* (Cambridge University Press 2001), p. 99 n.38.

"Art … a noble need for all"[10]

Earlier in this thesis consideration was given as to wherein lay the appeal of Positivism and the Religion of Humanity to Lushington. The conclusion was that in addition to appealing to his legal mind, Comte's ideas found a deep resonance with the artistic and emotional areas that were to be found within Lushington's nature. The Religion of Humanity could almost have been created with Lushington in mind. His strongly aesthetic nature found its natural expression in music and poetry, and in both of these he was a talented practitioner. Lushington also sought opportunities to promote the arts and gave encouragement and patronage where he could; and through his network of friendships he was able to make important contributions to a variety of the artistic disciplines in the second half of the nineteenth century.

This chapter will examine Lushington's enthusiastic participation in the five great arts Comte had classified. These were Poetry, Music, Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. It will commence with a discussion of Lushington's motivation for his involvement in the arts in the light of his Positivist beliefs, drawing largely from the manuscript of a lecture which he gave first to his fellow positivists at Newton Hall, London in 1887, and then, after some revision, to students at Oxford the following year. Material from that lecture will be supplemented by a section from another lecture which, although apparently dealing with a different subject, concludes with several pages which Lushington devoted to "the position of Art in the Positivist

[10] Lushington, *Art*.

System".[11] Reference will also be made to Comte's 'A General View of Positivism',[12] which contains a chapter on 'The Relation of Positivism to Art'. The chapter will then continue with an assessment of Lushington's specific contribution to the arts as patron, promoter and amateur practitioner. The arts were the area in which Lushington, in practising Positivism, functioned at his most natural.

Lushington saw poetry, music and painting as keys to the development of the spiritual side of the religion of humanity but there should be no suggestion that his participation in the arts was in any sense artificial or superficial; designed solely with the object of propagating Positivism. His involvement in these areas sprang from an in-born aesthetic nature which he believed was given a higher cause, purpose and expression in and through the Religion of Humanity. In an obituary of Lushington in the *Positivist Review*, Frederic Harrison wrote of his old friend:

> No one amongst us was so earnest to impress on our congregation the incalculable importance of Art in all its forms, poetic, musical, pictorial, and dramatic … the special character of the work which Vernon Lushington gave to our movement was to develop the spiritual side of the religion of Humanity, its sympathy for all forms of the beautiful, the true, and the loving, its ideal of a great development in poetry, in music, in painting.[13]

[11] It has not been possible to identify the preceding pages of this lecture or its subject. The original manuscript is in my possession.
[12] Auguste Comte, *A General View of Positivism Translated from the French by J.H. Bridges, MB* (London, Reeves & Turner, 1880).
[13] Paul Discourse, 'Vernon Lushington. Mr Frederic Harrison's Memorial Address', *The Positivist Review*, (April 1, 1912), 92-94.

Despite Lushington's profession as a lawyer, and his willingness to use his legal knowledge to assist such causes as the fledging trade unions, it was as a protagonist for the arts that his fellow Positivists best remembered him.[14] Lushington followed Comte in believing that the arts were the prime vehicle in establishing the new harmonised society that Positivism sought.

It was through Lushington's ability to network across a whole range of intellectual and social circles, that Positivism met the arts. However his role as an enthusiastic evangelist of the Religion of Humanity in relation to the arts has not previously been explored. The newly available archive allows Lushington to emerge from the shadows and provides an opportunity for a better understanding of this role and a fuller assessment of how successful he was in the use of the arts in his crusade for the new religion.

Lushington's unpublished lecture on Positivism and the arts, together with the additional notes referred to earlier, are of particular importance since they provide a further opportunity to hear directly from him on a subject which he considered to be of the highest importance. They also show how he had developed Comte's teaching on this subject and how he proposed they should be applied to contemporary society and, in particular, the audience he was addressing. Given that Positivism lay at the

[14] Lushington's friend and fellow Positivist James Cotter Morison also gave a lecture *On the Relation of Positivism to Art* which he published privately. The only copy I have found is in the library at Castle Howard. Cotter Morrison's lecture, although similar to Lushington's, takes a more aesthetic stance and deals more generally with the needs for the Arts in society.

heart of Lushington, these lecture notes make clear that for him the arts were at the centre of Positivism.

The arts had a crucial role within the development of Comte's thinking in its later stages and, in an attempt to silence those who believed that Positivism with its emphasis on the sciences left little room for them, he wrote:

> The reproach that Positivism is incompatible with Art arises simply from the fact that almost everyone is in the habit of confounding the philosophy itself with the scientific studies on which it is based … The esthetic (sic) faculties are too important to be disregarded in the normal state of Humanity; therefore they must not be omitted from the system which aims to introduce that state.[15]

When introducing his lecture on Art and Positivism, Lushington took pains to explain how Comte had taken over twenty years in "creating Positivist Sociology – a vast intellectual campaign" and that fifty pages of his first published work are given over to the discussion of Modern Art and what he considered to be its "grand career in the future." Lushington's description of art as having "a priestly function" is developed further in his essay and notes which are sprinkled with a rich use of religious language and phraseology as he expounds the theology of the new age that was dawning. Any vestiges of traditional Christian faith Lushington may have had are finally dispensed with as Humanity is enthroned. Thus Art came of age or, as

[15] *A General View of Positivism* p. 202.

Lushington put it, “the office of Art while accepting the teaching of Philosophy, is to glorify Humanity and cultivate in the Worshipper the feeling for perfection of every kind.” This worship of Humanity lay at the core of Lushington’s being and Art was to be the vehicle through which society would be changed. In his lecture Lushington outlined all the aspects of the arts through which the new Religion of Humanity could be expressed. These ranged from painting and drawing to music, prose, poetry and architecture – all disciplines in which Lushington participated in some measure.

Lushington opened his lecture to his Oxford audience in 1888 by extolling the virtues of that city as a place of education but he quickly moved on to say that the classical education then offered by the university was not enough. He made a passionate presentation in which he developed Comte’s thinking in a cogent and persuasive argument for what he called a “Synthetic Education”. Lushington demonstrates something of the Arnoldian influence on him by adding that this liberal education would be “a systematic preparation for the general life … designed upon a full survey of life, & above all due appreciation of its spiritual needs.” Furthermore the arts were to replace the spiritual values which Christianity had formerly provided. Instead of being an adjunct to life for a small elite the Arts were to be considered as “a noble need for all.”

But more than providing a liberal education and a new set of spiritual values in which beauty took the higher place, it was in Comte’s philosophy that in art the unity of human nature was to find its most complete and most natural representation. Lushington wrote: “Art is to serve Science: its office is to diffuse agreeably, to

popularise, to win general acceptance for scientific truth – also to moderate industrial egoism." Here he again reveals an important side of his personality and character that has already been noted in other areas, namely that of a peacemaker and moderator.[16] Unlike those who expressed themselves by violent means in 1848, the Positivists would achieve their revolution by the peaceful means of education and persuasive argument.

"Affection and Sympathy"

Lushington's lecture on Art and Positivism continued with an explanation of how Comte came to the realisation that his original philosophy was not enough. Something more was required than just an understanding of the development of humanity or an idealized new order of governance. Positivism had to encompass the whole being. Thus was born the Religion of Humanity which was to find expression through such attributes as "Affection" and "Sympathy". After explaining how affection was the "motive power of human life & the source of union, unity & continuity", Lushington went on to explain how, in the second phase of Comte's life, his previous works "remained unshaken" but was taken a stage further when they were "adjusted & consecrated" to form the foundation of the Religion of Humanity:

[16] "I have never known a nature more sympathetic than that of our deceased friend. If ever there was any point of disagreement between him and any of his coreligionists he turned from it instinctively and preferred to dwell on subjects about which all were in harmony and this because he valued above all things union and fraternal cooperation." E.S. Beesly, *The Positivist Review*, April 1, 1912.

> The intellect was to be the servant of the Heart, tho' never as in former times its slave. Thus giving moral supremacy to Feeling, it was inevitable that Comte shd. now claim a far higher place than before Art, which lives in giving & receiving sympathy … that office of Art, while accepting the teaching of Philosophy, is to glorify Humanity, and cultivate in the Worshipper the feeling for perfection of every kind.[17]

In this section of his lecture Lushington shows a marked use of a language of measured service through the use of the contrasting roles of servant and slave. It also demonstrates Lushington's need for some kind of religious language despite his lack of traditional faith. "Affection" and "Feeling" were also important in his arguments. Throughout his life Lushington demonstrated a deep sense of feeling and emotion in so many situations, leading his youngest daughter to exclaim "Oh why are we such an emotional family!"[18] Cockshut suggested that, "Nearly all the great Victorians were very emotional men and it is impossible for a deeply emotional man to carry scepticism beyond a certain point." [19]

It was the final flowering of Positivism expressed in the Religion of Humanity that held such a strong appeal for Lushington who, despite his lack of any orthodox belief, still retained a deep sense of morality and a marked religious spirit. With this in mind: Lushington hastened to point out to his audience the significance of what he calls "the great chapter" in "A General View". The chapter is headed "The Relation

[17] Lushington, *Art.*
[18] Diary of Susan Lushington, Sunday 21 November 1891.
[19] A.O.J. Cockshut, *The Unbelievers*, (Collins, London, 1964), p. 32.

of Positivism to Art", and in Comte's book is placed immediately before the final climactic chapter in which Comte explains the Religion of Humanity. It is through the arts that Positivism will ultimately develop from a factual philosophical understanding of Humanity into a true religion with Humanity at its centre. Comte spent twenty years in creating his Positive Sociology and, at the end of that time, in Lushington's words:

> He [Comte] announces a grand career for Art in the future, a popular & yet noble career…The office of Art, while accepting the teaching of Philosophy, is to glorify Humanity, and cultivate in the Worshipper the feeling for perfection of every kind. Comte had hitherto put Doctrine first. … He now gave the Worship that place. Henceforth the order was Worship, Doctrine, Practical Life. Feeling was thus more than ever exalted; Order also, and with them necessary Art. Henceforth … the Positive Religion would be more aesthetic than scientific, and Life was to be as far as possible, & always more & more a continuous act of worship.[20]

Lushington, still making full use of religious language, continued his exposition as he emphasised the altruistic nature of the Religion of Humanity:

> We want to rejoice & to help others to rejoice to the uttermost in the blessings which Humanity gives us. For this purpose we want to love Humanity more & more, & to adore & adorn Humanity. Here then is the

[20] Lushington, *Art*.

> office of Art, & that Art will be truly humane: it will avoid the over solemnising of Monotheism & better than any Pagan Art will celebrate & dignify all that is useful & delightful to man.[21]

Here Lushington, in recognising that Humanity is imperfect, explains that it is art that will adorn and beautify it, thereby making it worthy of adoration through the Religion of Humanity.

Elsewhere in this lecture Lushington expresses his concern at the destruction of beauty by the rise of industrialism.

> You must be aware how brutally contemptuous of beauty is modern Industry, the Black Country by my witness: and if you have read Darwin's life, you must remember how pathetically he felt his sensibility to Art decay, in his own word, atrophy, under the grinding pursuit of the physical laws.[22]

This short section is remarkably reminiscent of the words of another passionate advocate for a higher role for Art in society, Lushington's old friend William Morris who, just four years earlier, had spoken out at "the black horror and reckless squalor of our manufacturing districts, so dreadful to the senses which are unused to them that it is ominous for the future of the race that any man can live among it in

[21] Ibid.
[22] Ibid.

tolerable cheerfulness".[23] Lushington's relationship with Morris will be dealt with later in this chapter.

In considering Lushington's involvement in the Arts it would seem appropriate to consider here his involvement with the Pre-Raphaelite artists.

The Pre-Raphaelites

The event for which Lushington is now best remembered is his introduction of Edward Burne-Jones to Dante Gabriel Rossetti, an event which triggered the second phase of the Pre-Raphaelite movement. The original Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, or PRB, had been formed in 1848, by a group of young artists united in opposition to conventional systems of artistic teaching. Lushington, like William Morris and other members of The Set, found great inspiration in the works of Rossetti, Hunt, and Millais and they conceived the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* as a successor to *The Germ*; the PRB's short lived journal. Although at the Oxford Union in 1854 Frederic Harrison declared the PRB to be 'possessed of some deplorable delusions' he also believed them capable of offering 'hopes for a revival of art'.[24] Despite Harrison's hopes, the original PRB disbanded that same year. However, and in the effusive words of William Gaunt, although the original Pre-Raphaelite vision "was to die" it would be "born again, to shoot an uncanny ray through the material opacity of the times, to sparkle like radium in the leaden tube of Victoria's reign: through

[23] William Morris, "Art and Socialism" – a lecture to the Leicester Secular Society. 23 January 1884.
[24] Herbert Arthur Morrah, *The Oxford Union, 1823-1923* (London, 1923), p. 171.

literature, art, religion, politics, even tables and chairs."[25] It was in this rebirth that Lushington unwittingly played a truly significant role.

In 1901 when Lady Burne-Jones was collecting information for a biography of her late husband she wrote to Lushington for details of the event which had changed her late husband's life forever. Replying from Egypt, where he was on holiday, Lushington responded to Lady Burne-Jones' letter that it had touched "a deep ancient chord …The incident itself, charming & important as in truth it really was, had nearly passed from memory when it was revived by the statement of your Husband. Then it came back to me." Lushington recalled the meeting as having been early in 1856 "in the springtime of my friendship with your Husband & Rossetti … I am inclined to suggest about the middle or end of January."[26]

The importance of that meeting and its resultant effect upon the development of art in the second half of the nineteenth century cannot be overstated. According to a statement on the website of the Pre-Raphaelite Society "without Burne-Jones, the Pre-Raphaelite Movement would have been a phenomenon not a continuity". To this it could be added that without Lushington, Burne-Jones might never have made the dramatic life-changing decision that led him to become one of the leading artists of the Victorian era. Burne-Jones himself readily acknowledged this and, later in his

[25] Gaunt, p. 24.
[26] Burne-Jones papers VII i, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.

life, he wrote to Lushington, "My first introduction to Gabriel was your doing – and big results it brought into my life."[27]

The young Burne-Jones and William Morris had first heard of the Pre-Raphaelites and Rossetti through Ruskin's Edinburgh Lectures of 1854. Burne-Jones had particularly formed a deep admiration for Rossetti and his work and was desperate to meet him. Hearing that his demigod might be present at a meeting of the Working Men's College, Burne-Jones made his way there one evening. He was welcomed by Frederick Furnivall who led him to "a kindly-looking man whom he introduced as Vernon Lushington." In due course Lushington whispered to Burne-Jones that Rossetti had entered the room leaving Burne-Jones to recall how "I saw him for the first time, his face satisfying all my worship." Burne-Jones was far too in awe to approach him directly and so Lushington invited him to his rooms at Doctors Commons where, a few nights later, Rossetti was due to attend. Burne-Jones later recorded:

> On the night appointed, about ten o'clock, I went to Lushington's rooms where was a company of men, some of whom have been best friends ever since. I remember Saffi was there, and Rossetti's brother William, and bye and bye Rossetti came, and I was taken up to meet him and had my first fearful talk with him. Browning's 'Men and Women' had just been published a few days before, and someone speaking disrespectfully of that book was rent in pieces at once for his pains, and was dumb for the rest of the evening

[27] Gaunt p. 70.

– so that I saw my hero could be a tyrant and I thought it sat finely. Also another unwary man professed an interest in metaphysics; he also was dealt with firmly.[28]

"Oxford and Pre-Raphaelitism met - in Vernon Lushington's rooms"[29]

There is some discrepancy in Burne-Jones's account of his first sighting of Rossetti as he implies that it was also his first meeting with Lushington. This seems strange as is it likely that he had first met Lushington in Cambridge in 1854 when he travelled there with William Morris. Whatever the facts, it was a truly historic meeting and one which led Gaunt to write that it was the year in which "Oxford and Pre-Raphaelitism met – in Vernon Lushington's rooms…It was a second beginning of Pre-Raphaelitism, not to be confused with the first." Burne-Jones subsequently introduced Rossetti to William Morris and that meeting resulted in the somewhat bizarre ménage a trois of Rossetti, Morris and Morris's wife Jane at Kelmscott Manor. It was Rossetti who persuaded Burne-Jones to abandon his academic aspirations and thoughts of entering the church to become a painter. Here again Lushington's role in this chain of events deserves more recognition.

The second phase of Pre-Raphaelitism was both an artistic and a literary movement. Like Rossetti's brother William, Lushington was not an artist and yet he, like

[28] Lady Georgina Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* (Macmillan & Co.1912), p. 129. Count Aurelio Saffi (1819-90) had, with Giuseppe Mazzini, fought for Italian independence in the 1850s. In 1849 Saffi was in Oxford where he shared his contagious passion for Dante which was soon caught by Lushington

[29] Gaunt p. 70.

William, secured a place within the artists' circle. That Lushington had fully embraced Pre-Raphaelitism in its widest sense is demonstrated by William Michael Rossetti who playfully described Lushington's family's 'Principles and Practice in Furnishing' as being 'High Art, Blue Greens, Japanese Cabinets, Expense unworthy of consideration.'[30]

Lushington remained on good terms with many of the Pre-Raphaelite painters throughout his life.[31] William Holman Hunt, whom Lushington had invited to Ockham Park in 1862 to paint his father's portrait, was fondly adopted as "Uncle Holman" by Lushington's three daughters.[32] Rossetti painted Jane Lushington at the time of her marriage and she described her visit to his studio in a letter to her husband.[33] Wanting a piece of jewellery as a present for his future wife, Lushington asked Rossetti to make the selection, and what Rossetti chose was no staid Victorian piece but a hair ornament later described as "such a thing as the princess of an Oriental fairytale might wear": a humming bird's breast of copper and blue-green enamel, with a nodding metal head and quivering wings.[34] Lushington was one of the few who attended Rossetti's funeral at Birchington in 1882, recording the event

[30] Ibid p.71.
[31] In 1860 A.J. Munby recorded a visit to Oxford when he met Vernon and Godfrey Lushington and together they went to visit Thomas Combe the publisher and art collector where they met Holman Hunt and Thomas Woolner and saw four well known Pre-Raphaelite paintings – *The Light of the World,*, *The Return of the Dove*, *The Persecution of the Christians by Druids*, and *The Nun.*
[32] When Hunt died in 1910 his widow wrote to Lushington inviting him to be a pall bearer at the funeral service which was to be held in St Paul's Cathedral. Lushington declined in the grounds of his age but attended the service and, the following day, wrote to his daughter Susan with a description of the event. "The general aspect was majestic & not too grey cold, but here the beauty of the day saved us. The music was soft & sweet, but (in my judgement) inarticulate. It was overcooked, cooked to death in fact - for tho' I know the Braham's 'Blessed are they that mourn' pretty well, & Handel's Dead March very well, I could hardly distinguish either." Tuesday 13 September 1910. SHC 7854/Box12/5.
[33]Jane to Vernon Lushington, 17 August 1865. SHC 7854/l/1/14.
[34] Gaunt, p.109.

for William Bell Scott who was too infirm to make the journey.[35] A less well known Pre-Raphaelite painter, Henry Holiday, later persuaded Lushington to allow his eldest daughter Kitty to model for the servant woman in his painting of *Dante and Beatrice* which is now in the Walker Gallery in Liverpool. However, of all the Pre-Raphaelite painters that Lushington befriended, it was Arthur Hughes who became a particularly close friend of the whole family, often staying with them at their home in Cobham. It was there that he painted the magnificent *The Home Quartet* which shows Jane Lushington at the piano with her talented daughters each playing a musical instrument. An interesting detail in the painting is the inclusion of a copy of the score of Beethoven's 'Fidelio' lying on the floor, it being at a performance of this work that Lushington had first met his wife to be.[36] Susan Lushington's diaries record that Hughes also painted a now lost portrait of her father.

[35] Lushington described Rossetti's funeral in a letter to his friend William Bell Scott dated 14 April 1882. "I think that you will like to hear how your dear friend Gabriel Rossetti was buried, so I will tell you – for, thanks to your kind telegram, I was there; I had hoped to see you there, and was grieved to hear that you were prevented by illness. The church at Birchington stands back about three-quarters of a mile from the sea, on slightly rising ground, which looks over the open land and sea. It is of gray country flint, built in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries and restored a few year ago, I thought simply; it is nicely kept, and today was full of Easter flowers … At the graveside, wonderful to say, was the old mother, supported by William on one side and Christina on the other – a most pathetic sight, She was very calm, extraordinarily calm, but whether from self-command or the passivity of age, I do not known – probably from both; but she follows all the proceedings with close interest. Then around was a company of about fifteen or twenty, many of them friends of your, and several I did not know. The service was well read by the vicar. Then we all looked into the last resting-place of our friend, and thought and felt our last farewells – many flowers, azaleas and primroses were thrown in. I saw William throw in his lily of the valley. This is all I have to tell you. Sad it was, very sad, but simple and full of feeling, and the beauty of the day made itself felt with all the rest … Dear Gabriel, I shall not forget him." W. Minto ed. *Autobiographical Notes on the Life of William Bell Scott, H.R.S.A., LL.D* (London: James R. Osgood, McIvaine & Co., 1892) pp. 317-8.

[36] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. "On 25th June 1864 my brother & I went to hear Beethoven's Fidelio: next to my brother & next but one to me sat the Lady, who when Shrove Tuesday comes, will be my wife." Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, undated.

Lushington the Aesthete

Lushington's appreciation of the Arts was not simply confined to painting and, despite his lack of any particularly strong artistic antecedents and his choice of a career in the law, he possessed a remarkably strong aesthetic nature.

A great talent for friendship within the artistic world drew Lushington to the Hogarth Club which met in premises in Waterloo Road, London. This was an important, but short lived venture, which had been founded in 1858 as an association of artists, friends and sympathizers, by Ford Madox Brown and D.G. Rossetti. It was both a social and an exhibiting centre and it provided Lushington with further opportunities to network within the various artistic and literary circles in which he moved. William Bell Scott recalled: "The only non-artistic members I remember meeting were Vernon Lushington and his brother Godfrey, sincere and intelligent lovers of art and its professors; and in many ways Vernon was and is one of the most admirable of men."[37] The Hogarth Club gave Lushington the perfect opportunity not just to admire and promote painting but also to discuss and develop artistic theories including its relationship to Positivism.

It was not only in London that Lushington promoted the work of his artist friends. His work in the legal profession took him regularly to the Northern Circuit, which took in the new industrial areas of the North England such as Liverpool and

[37] W. Minto, ed. *Autobiographical Notes on the Life of William Bell Scott and Notices of His Artistic and Poetic Circle of Friends, 1830-1882* (London, 1892), II, p. 47.

Manchester. It was in these cities, encouraged by events such as the Manchester Art Exhibition of 1857, that nouveau riche wealthy industrialists were investing their fortunes in works of art, especially paintings.[38] They included Peter Millar of Liverpool, James Leathart of Newcastle, George Rae of Birkenhead, F. R. Leyland of the shipping line, and T.E. Plint, the Leeds stockbroker.

Peter Millar was an early collector of modern paintings and, in 1858, Lushington wrote to the sculptor Thomas Woolner that that he had been "smoking a pipe with our friend Mr Millar".[39] In 1867 Lushington wrote to his wife from Liverpool that Millar had taken him to see Leyland, "a client of mine" and his collection of paintings."[40] A few months later Lushington was back in Liverpool where he dined with George Rae.[41] Lushington no doubt took these opportunities of mixing business with pleasure to discuss with his clients their art collections, perhaps even recommending purchases from his artist friends such as Rossetti, whose work was increasingly in demand.

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[38] The Manchester exhibition was the largest ever held in the United Kingdom and attracted over 1.3 million visitors, including Queen Victoria, Charles Dickens and John Ruskin. Contemporary works of art exhibited included some key Pre-Raphaelite pieces including Holman Hunts' *Hireling Shepherd*, Arthur Hughes's *April Love*, and Henry Wallis's *Death of Chatterton.* In a letter to Ford Maddox Brown dated 16 August 1857 Lushington mentioned that he had "just come back from Manchester & the pictures there. The only fault I can find is that there is too many of them. It is like reading thro' an Epic at a sitting." V&A, National Art Library, MSL/1995/14/59/4.

[39] Lushington to Woolner, quoted in Woolner, p. 140

[40] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 4 April 1867. "Old Mr Mellor would take me last night up to see Mr Leyland & his new pictures. Mr Leyland is a client of mine, the same you may remember, whose wife showed first her pink Topazes, & other diamonds. Lately he has been under proper influence buying Turners & Rossettis & Jones's & Solomon's, and so he has a number of beautiful pictures." SHC 7854/3/4/8.

[41] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 20 August 1867. "Tomorrow evening I dine out with a gentleman a stranger to me – Mr Rae, a banker – to see some Pre Raphaelite pictures – He is one of their chief patrons – has a good many Rossettis." 21 August – "The whole house is a den of Pre-Raphaelite things. He has no carpets, only Moorish rugs & mats. Then the furniture on the ground floor is all carved Indian work. And all the walls are hung with Rossetti, Stanhope, Madox Brown, Davis & the rest – many of them very beautiful & the whole forming a very fine collection." SHC 7854/3/4/21.

Thomas Woolner

An example of Lushington's generous ability to use his connections to help his talented artist friends is well illustrated in the case of Thomas Woolner, one of the original members of the PRB. Lushington was instrumental in securing a number of commissions for Woolner starting in 1856 when he arranged for him to make a medallion portrait of Stephen Lushington. In November of that year Woolner wrote to Tennyson's wife, "I have finished my medallion of Dr. Lushington which gives great satisfaction to the family. They are most delightful persons and I enjoyed my visit to them very much; Vernon, my friend, is one of the kindest and nicest fellows living I think."[42] In 1859 Lushington was instrumental in persuading a group of fellow Trinity men to purchase Woolner's sculpture of Tennyson and have it placed in the College Library. It is likely that it was Lushington who, a few years later, secured a major commission for Woolner. These were a set of sculptures at the new Manchester Assize Courts. Lushington naturally had professional connections with the Courts and, after a visit to the new buildings in 1865 with the novelist Elizabeth Gaskell, he wrote to his wife announcing "I am a Goth, have you found that out?" He then went on to explain, "I greatly admire the new Assize Courts at Manchester … thro' Mrs Gaskell I have made the acquaintance of the Architect, Mr Waterhouse, a very promising young man; & indeed he showed us all over the building, before it was complete." Lushington then told his wife that he would like to show her the building and, in particular, the motto "which I caused to be written in inevitable

[42] Woolner to Lady Tennyson, 6 November 1856 quoted in Woolner p. 122. In another letter to Lady Tennyson, dated 16 March 1857, Woolner writes of Lushington, "I know you will like him greatly for he is one of the dearest fellows living."

letters of the wall." Waterhouse was proposing the biblical "Thou shalt not bear false witness". However Lushington proposed that he used the words, "The truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth" and Waterhouse agreed.[43]

"Music … most sympathetic of all the Arts"[44]

Although chiefly remembered for his association with the painters of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, Lushington was not a painter. However, there were two areas of the Arts in which Lushington was a practitioner rather than an admirer. These were music and poetry and, perhaps not surprisingly, both of these ranked highly in the Religion of Humanity. At the Working Men's College in London, Lushington's singing classes were always popular and his lectures on the arts to the London Positivist group led one former workman to comment, "Personally I owe him a great debt for teaching me to love poetry and the arts of music, painting, and sculpture, which are now such a true source of enjoyment to me." [45]

Lushington's love of music, both instrumental and vocal, was shared by his wife and three daughters. Jane Lushington was an accomplished pianist and one admirer was their friend Charles Darwin who "enjoyed the late Mrs Vernon Lushington's playing intensely."[46] Jane was also an enthusiastic member of the Bach Choir where she

[43] Vernon to Jane Lushington Tuesday, 23 February 1865. SHC 7857/Box3/1/16.
[44] Lushington. *The* Arts. Lecture given in Oxford, 3 June 1888.
[45] *The Working Men's College Journal*, Vol. XII, No. 223, March 1912.
[46] F. Darwin, ed., *The Life and Letters of Charles Darwin* (New York, D. Appleton & Co. 1887), Vol. 1, p. 124.

befriended Jenny Lind.[47] The three Lushington girls were all talented musicians in their own right and were encouraged in their playing by Hubert Parry who was a London neighbour in Kensington Square. Parry wrote as a gift several compositions especially for the Lushington girls and often invited them to play through his new compositions, welcoming their comments.[48] Other contemporary composers befriended by the Lushington family included Arnold Dolmetsch who, in 1887, composed a cello solo for Margaret Lushington, and the German Ferdinand Hiller. The violinist Joseph Joachim and his family were close friends of the Lushingtons as was the conductor Hans Richter who introduced them to the works of Wagner.

Another young composer who was a friend of the Lushington family and who had yet to make a name for himself at this time was Ralph Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams was related to Stephen Massingberd of Gunby Hall, Lincolnshire whom Lushington's daughter Margaret married in 1895. The young Vaughan Williams played the organ at the wedding ceremony of Stephen and Margaret which took place at Cobham parish church and later, when he took up composing, he was a major contributor to music festivals which Margaret held in Lincolnshire. Vaughan Williams's regular visits to Gunby provided him with much of the inspiration for his early compositions. It was whilst staying at Gunby in 1903 that he composed his

[47] In June 1883 Jane Lushington wrote to Vernon that she had called on Jenny Lind who by then had retired from public performances. " … a delightful visit we had, with that Queen of a woman – she looked & said she felt perfectly well owing to the Malvern air - & was charming." After speaking about Lind's purchase of a property in Malvern she "spoke of her work at the [Working Men's?] College … & said it was a great tie & a great labor to her – but she enjoyed it because she felt there was still something left for her to do – that her knowledge & experience of singing was as great as any one - & that she had some of the poorest in the land with beautiful voices among her pupils whom she delighted to teach." SHC 7854/2/7.

[48] Two of Parry's intermezzi for string trios, written in 1884, carry the dedication "K, M & S.L."

tone poem “In the Fen Country” and, later that year he composed “Sound Sleep”, a trio for female voices based on the poems of Christina Rossetti, which he dedicated to Margaret. Vaughan Williams was almost certainly introduced to the work of the Rosettis, as well as Algernon Swinburne, by the Lushingtons.[49]

In addition to his friendship with composers and performers Lushington was an enthusiastic supporter of the Tonic Sol Fa Movement for teaching music. In 1874 he led a deputation to William Forster, President of the Board of Education, requesting that this method of teaching should be introduced into the national school curriculum.[50]

“The Father of Modern Music”

Two examples of how Lushington used what might be called his “Positivist lens” in the study of other artists working in the fields which Comte ranked so highly, namely music and poetry, are provided firstly in a published lecture on Mozart in which he looks back to the past and then, turning to a contemporary artist, his

[49] Susan Lushington remained a close friend of Vaughan Williams until her death in 1953. Susan was an accomplished musician in her own right and Vaughan Williams worked with her on a number of concerts which she organised in Kingsley, Hampshire where she lived after the death of her father. For more on Susan Lushington see Helen Penn Mirwald and Martha S Vogeler, “A Life Devoted To Music: Susan Lushington In Kingsley”, *Proceedings of the Hampshire Field Club Archaeological Society* 54, 1999, pp. 232-242.

[50] Susan Lushington’s diary, Monday 19 March 1888. “& then to the Tonic Sol Fa demonstration where father took the chair and made a delightful little speech ... The children did wonders.”

unpublished notes on a poet for whom he had the greatest admiration, namely Walt Whitman.[51]

In 1882 Lushington gave an address on Mozart at a musical commemoration of the composer to the Positivist Society at Newton Hall. In the Positivist Calendar Mozart was the representative of Modern Music. Lushington stated at the outset of his lecture that it was "a Religious Commemoration of Mozart, by our Positivist Community."[52] The purpose of the lecture was to "help you see more clearly the larger services of Music and Art to Humanity, and to invite you to honour Mozart for his glorious part in that service, in the name and for the sake of Humanity, to which, whether we acknowledge it or not, we all belong."[53]

In line with Comte's teaching, Lushington also believed that the Middle Ages represented a peak in the development of Humanity. This was due to the Catholic Church of the pre-Reformation period and, although "the Church did not honour artists or Art: - No! that its doctrine forbade", it was "through the wisdom of the

[51] Lushington also gave an address on Shakespeare to the London Positivist Society on a visit to Stratford on Avon in 1885. In his concluding remarks Lushington wrote," How then could Shakespeare bear witness to the crowning truth that Man tends to become more and more religious? Directly he could not. Shut out from the historic spirit, having no theory of human progress, ignorant of the fact of what the earlier religions had done for man, and virtually alienated from every religion then acknowledged, he could not directly express this precious truth, because he could not see it. Nevertheless, I claim him with confidence as a witness on our side, though an imperfect one … because with all his intellectual greatness he combines incomparably rich affection, rendering always spontaneous homage to the supremacy of Feeling, which represents the religious temper." Vernon Lushington, *Shakespeare. An Address delivered to the Positivist Society of London on the 2nd of August, 1885 (18 Dante 97) at Stratford-on-Avon*, Reeves and Turner, London (1885) p. 23.
[52] Vernon Lushington, *Mozart: A Commemorative Address. Read Before The Positivist Society of London, on the 24th of December, 1882* (Reeves and Turner, 196, Strand, London, 1883) p. 3 & p. 19.
[53] Ibid. Vernon Lushington, Lushington sent a copy of a painting of the young Mozart to Mrs Gaskell's daughter Metal, who, in acknowledging the gift, said that it was "the most 'human' picture that was ever made."

priesthood it employed them. Accordingly cathedrals, monasteries, and even parochial churches became free and open treasure-houses of all the Arts – including Music – all dedicated to a worship which drew under its wings both the common and the more moving incidents of both domestic and public life."[54]

Lushington saw in Mozart "a Catholic and Chivalric feeling of the most precious kind, blending with modern pacific sympathies." He believed that "Music with all true Art is spontaneously religious. It slides into the soul of simple and learned, confirming their human faith and animating their human love." Although the composer had lived before the time of Comte and the development of Positivism, Lushington believed that "Mozart and his colleagues … by their delightful works rendered a true religious service to Humanity. They carried on their imaginative feelings that had issued from Catholicism and Chivalry; they kept faithful to the better Past, blending it with the better Present: they handed on a civilizing beauty from class to class, and from age to age." [55]

According to Lushington, Mozart's work expressed "the very spirit of the Religion of Humanity, which affirms the supremacy of Feeling, and cherishes continuity, and cares for human happiness in every form, and cares for men too, and above all cares for the men who produce it." It was for this reason that Lushington placed Mozart

[54] Lushington, *Mozart* p. 5.
[55] Ibid p.11.

within the Pantheon of Positivism as one of "the honourable and honoured auxiliaries of the human Priesthood."[56]

"Poetry, the most intellectual"

Wright has noted "the fact that the poets feature so prominently among the Positivist saints is an indication of the centrality of art and literature in particular, in Comte's system."[57] In fact, the Positivists believed that poetry could actually modify human moral nature.

Poetry had a strong appeal for Lushington and it was the one area of the arts in which he felt competent to practise. He composed a number of "Positivist Hymns" for use on special Positivist "feast days" days such as "The Day of Humanity", which concluded with the verse:

> Day when all men seem one
> Under the kindly sun:
> Day when thou reignest alone.
> Peerless Humanity![58]

Another set of verses, in two parts, celebrates the "Commemoration of Auguste Comte". It is difficult to believe that this could ever have been read, let alone, sung,

[56] Ibid p. 18.
[57] Wright p. 38.
[58] Lushington, *Positivist Hymns*, Printed Privately (1885) p. 4.

in its entirety as the first part extends to one hundred and forty-three verses of four lines each and the second part to twenty three verses. These verses are both a hymn of praise to Comte:

> Noble Teacher! On thy youth
> Smote the People, as a lyre:
> To thy death that generous rush
> Burned in thee, a central fire.[59]

and a catechism of Positivist belief such as the following verse which denies the Christian doctrine of the Fall:

> So the Past was glorified,
> Tho' there was no Paradise:
> Man from point to point of pride
> Shaped his upward destinies.[60]

Other verses were the Positivist "Day of All The Dead" and special events marking Positivist rights of passage such as "Destination", Marriage" and "Burial".

Another collection of verses by Lushington are his "Sonnets on The Positivist Calendar". This is a collection of thirteen poems on each of the characters after

[59] Ibid p. 5.
[60] Ibid p. 10.

whom Comte renamed the months of the year. Two of the characters from the calendar. Moses and Paul were each further honoured by Lushington in separate lengthy poems of twenty eight and seventeen verses respectively.

In addition to his overtly Positivistic verses, Lushington compiled poems on a variety of subjects which he published for private circulation among his friends. He also lectured to the London Positivists on poetry and two of these lectures, those on Burns and Shakespeare, were later published.[61] Lushington called Burns "a poet of the revolution" whose greatest theme was "the Supremacy of Man, and the universal Fraternity of Man."[62] Although, according to Lushington, this was only "half a gospel", it was nevertheless prophetic in terms of Positivism. Shakespeare was also deemed by Lushington to be a man "infected with the revolutionary spirit of the time … who was no pious Christian. His faith, we can see, was not really Christian at all; it was a loose Deism that like a loose cloak went on easily over it, and could be slipped off yet more easily."[63] Despite this Lushington felt confident that he could "claim him with confidence as a witness on our side, though an imperfect one. I do so because with all his intellectual greatness he combines incomparably rich affection, rendering always spontaneous homage to the supremacy of Feeling, which represents the religious temper." Shakespeare and Burns were topics of conversation when Lushington shared his views on poetry with his friend Arthur Munby who recorded in his journal:

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[61] Lushington, *Shakespeare*, 1896 & *Commemoration of Burns*, *An Address delivered at Newton Hall, on 22nd March, 1896*. Supplement to the Positivist Review, 1 May 1896, pp. 105-120.
[62] Lushington, *Commemoration of Burns* p. 118-119.
[63] Lushington, *Shakespeare* p. 22 -23.

> We talked of Burns, of poetry generally – he holding that nowadays it is time for a poet to leave introspection, & analysis of feelings & mere love of Nature, & to become Homeric and Shakespearean, & deal with & celebrate the facts & events of his time."[64]

The idea of celebrating the "facts & events of his time" is something that Lushington had encouraged the artist Ford Madox Brown to pursue when he wrote to him, "I wish all you Pre-Raphaelites would give yourselves up to work of recording things memorable amongst us now, God knows, today is interesting enough."[65]

Another of Lushington's favourite poets was Shelley, one of the few poets recommended by Comte. When it came to contemporary poets Lushington, like others within the Pre-Raphaelite circle, also came under the spell of Robert Browning whom had he met in Siena in the autumn of 1860 when travelling with William Rossetti. During his conversation with the poet Lushington mentioned the music of Ferdinand Hiller which prompted Browning to respond, "Ah now I understand who you are. When I find a man who shares with me a liking for Hiller's music, I can see into him at once; he ceases to be a stranger."[66] In 1882 when Lushington was again travelling in Italy he wrote to his wife from Siena:

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[64] Munby Diary 17 March 1859.
[65] Lushington to Ford Madox Brown, 1 April 1856, National Art Library, MSL/1995/14/59/1-4.
[66] W. Hall Griffin and Harry C. Minchin, *The Life of Robert Browning* (London, 1910), p. 287. This episode is also recounted in fuller detail in William Rossetti's *Reminiscences*, pp. 236-241

> Here 22 years ago I met the Brownings, who were spending the summer in a villa about a mile of the City, I remember her demonstrative affection for her boy – a littler fellow of 10 or 11 with long brown hair, & her somewhat excessive ardour of speech in political & other matters – which Browning took care to temper with humorous remarks – and here too Browning introduced William Rossetti & me to old Savage Landor – then under his friendly charge.[67]

Lushington's love of poetry also led him to emerging new poets such as Swinburne and the American Walt Whitman whose work he and William Rossetti helped introduce to an English audience – an act which Whitman, like Burne-Jones, later gratefully acknowledged publicly.

Swinburne – "In a sense I felt [he] belonged to me".

The Lushington archive contains a copy (in Susan Lushington's hand) of a letter from Swinburne to Lushington dated 26 January 1889. The letter is a reply to one from Lushington following the recent death of their mutual friend, the artist J.W. Inchbold. Swinburne refers to also having receiving "an eloquent and interesting address" from Lushington which he "had been studied at once with sympathy and attention." This must have been one of Lushington's published Positivist papers

[67] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 25 August 1882. SHC7854//19. Further details of the visit to the Brownings are to be found in a letter from Lushington to Elizabeth Barrett Browning dated 9 November 1860. This letter was reproduced in full in an article "Some Unpublished Papers pf Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning " in *Harper's Monthly* Vol. 132, March 1916, pp. 530-39.

(probably *The Worship of Humanity*) as Swinburne continues "But I cannot say that it has altered my view of the opinion, or creed, or doctrine which it so ably formulates. It has always seemed to me, and now it seems more than ever that the admirable doctrine of Coleridge about Catholic doctrine & transubstantiation is no less exactly applicable to your religion or philosophy – it mistakes rhetoric for logic." Although Swinburne rejected the Religion of Humanity, after his death. Lushington wrote, "I have been moved by 2 deaths last week, Swinburne & Whitley Stokes. England & above all my generation is the poorer for their loss. In a sense I felt that they both belonged to me. I am very glad the notices of Swinburne have all been so generous."[68]

Whitman - "a Poet of the Revolution"

In 1868 Lushington wrote to his wife from Liverpool, "Going down in the train last night I read till dark Walt Whitman. A wonderful fellow, a wonderful poet, beyond all doubt. In his *Drum Taps* he gives you his experience of the war & the war hospitals. Some of these are most pathetic."[69] In her diaries Susan Lushington often noted how her father would read the poet or spontaneously quote him when he was feeling in a particularly happy mood. Both Vernon and Godfrey Lushington were acknowledged by Whitman as two who helped his *Leaves of Grass* "bubble forth as a fresh spring from the ground in England in 1876."[70] But did Whitman express the

[68] Lushington to Kitty Maxse. West Sussex Record Office, Maxse 432/205.
[69] Vernon to Jane Lushington, 24 August 1868. SHC 7854/3/5.
[70] The Lushington archive contains a printed postcard from Whitman thanking Lushington for "Your subscription for my Books – for which hearty thanks." SHC 7854/ 6.

Religion of Humanity in his work? The archive contains some notes by Lushington on Whitman in which he writes "Whitman, so far as appears has never heard of Positivism, never read a line of Aug. Comte: his testimony, such as it is, is therefore wholly spontaneous, moreover, it may be said at once that he is not a Poet of Positivism, far from it."[71] Despite the fact that Whitman cannot be considered a "Poet of Positivism" Lushington believed that his importance lay in the fact that he was, like Shakespeare and Burns before him:

> a Poet of the Revolution however out of which Positivism emanated, and which it aims to terminate. He represents I feel one of the last stages of that Revolution; and expresses most powerfully some of its noblest aspirations, its best tendencies and its inevitable aberrations & failures, he thus forms a most interesting subject of study.[72]

The "Revolution" was the French Revolution which the Positivists saw as a watershed in history ushering in the new, Positivistic, age. In his paper on Art Lushington explains how that Revolution had "terminated one epoch in grim destruction" and "started another into most energetic life." Lushington considered that other poets of the Revolution were Goethe, Victor Hugo, Byron, Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley & Keats. "They all conspired to breed dissatisfaction with present institutions, but deep interest in some portions of the past

[71] From Lushington's notes on Whitman which are in my possession.
[72] Ibid.

& fervent hopes for the future & above all interest in people, & the material beauty of Nature which has been so despised & defiled by modern industry". [73]

Despite a concern for Whitman's "most serious defect in doctrine" Lushington still believed Whitman to be:

> A powerful thinker looking out upon 19th century life in America – there is nothing within his ken that he does not strive to face with entire candour & sincerity: the aspects of earth & heaven, the deep questioning of human mind respecting Life & Death; - political institutors, war & peace, relationship of men & women; personal conduct.[74]

Whitman's saving grace is the way in which he "intensely appreciates affection in all its forms. Underneath all he sees as the basis of human life the dear love of man for his comrade, the attraction of friend to friend, of the well-married husband & wife – of children & parents, of city for city, and land for land. These are to be found in his poems." Lushington also comments on Whitman's line, "Patriarchs sit at supper with sons & grandsons around them" which expresses perfectly the "value of continuity between generation & generation" which lay at the heart of Positivism.

Despite Whitman's shortfall in other areas of doctrine, when it came to "motive feeling" Lushington believed that "in reading Walt Whitman we are in the presence

[73] Lushington *Art*, 18 December 1887 and revised in June 1888.
[74] Ibid.

of a most noble poetic nature … the spontaneous warmth & power of Whitman's social affections is not merely remarkable: it is very glorious indeed …as regards personal friendship, Whitman may be said to be the modern Apostle, so much has he glorified it." To illustrate this Lushington then quotes Whitman:

> … the beautiful & sane affection of man for man, latent in all the young fellows North & South, East & West, it is by this , I say & by what goes directly & indirectly along with it that the United States of the future (I cannot too often repeat) are to be most effectively welded together … unto a living union.[75]

Lushington was being a little naïve when he saw this as "the last point of tenderness. He makes these [affections] subordinate to the love of Country." Lushington would not have been aware of Whitman's homosexuality and instead saw the poet as expressing values that were at the centre of the Religion of Humanity. Lushington viewed Whitman as Harold Blogett described him, "a rebel against the *status quo*, who furnished to a few ardent minds a means for both social and personal improvement. It was as a moralist and a prophet rather than as an artist that he threw the gauntlet to the English."[76] Whitman offered a "renovated humanity" and, in a sense Lushington saw him as a type of John the Baptist preparing society for the appearance of its saving Messiah in the person of Humanity.[77]

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[75] Ibid.
[76] Harold Blodgett, *Walt Whitman in England*, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1973), p. 217.
[77] A catalogue of books offered for sale from Lushington's library in 1912 included an autographed copy of *Leaves of Grass*, and a further sale in 1930 included Whitman's *Two Rivulets including*

Turning to Lushington's prose, in addition to essays on Carlyle in the Oxford and Cambridge Magazine, he also contributed to the magazine an essay on *Two Pictures* by his artist friends Ford Madox Brown and D.G. Rossetti. This essay will be discussed later in this chapter in the light of Lushington's Positivist beliefs.

In the literary world of the nineteenth century Lushington developed friendships with George Eliot whose work was regarded highly by the Positivists. He also befriended Thomas Hardy who, with his first wife, was entertained at Lushington's London home. Hardy, whilst never a Positivist, undertook a close study of Comte and it is likely that Lushington saw him as another possible convert. The author George Gissing attended a number of Positivist meetings at Newton Hall and was employed for a while by Lushington as a tutor to his three daughters. [78]

William Morris – "friend of my youth"

Despite the fact that Lushington preached the role of Art within the Religion of Humanity and Morris preached its role within the politics of Socialism, there is some common ground in their thinking and speaking and, in developing their arguments; both chose to cite as their ultimate authority their mutual friend Ruskin. Morris expressed views very similar to those of Lushington and on the subject of the relation of art to commerce. Morris also bemoaned the dominance of Commerce:

Democratic Vistas, Centennial Songs and Passage to India inscribed "Vernon Lushington from the Author".

[78] For Hardy and Positivism, Wright pp. 202. For Gissing and Positivism, Wright, pp. 218-229

> Now whereas there have been times in the world's history when Art held the supremacy over Commerce; when Art was a good deal, and Commerce, as we understand the word, was a very little; so now on the contrary it will be admitted by all, I fancy, that Commerce has become of very great importance, Art has of very little.[79]

Later Morris appears to concur with Comte's thoughts on Art and the working classes:

> the greater part of the people have no share in Art – which as things now are must be kept in the hands of a few rich or well-to-do people, who we may fairly say need it less and not more than the laborious workers.[80]

From their first meeting as undergraduates, Lushington and Morris went on to develop a life-long friendship despite the fact they chose different paths to outwork their crusade for social change. Lushington acknowledged the influence that his old friend had had on him in a letter which he wrote on hearing of Morris's death:

> In dear William Morris's case I have far more poignant feelings. He was a genius with much yet to do & will to do it, & he leaves Wife & Daughter in feeble anxious health, both true objects of compassion. Moreover he was the friend of so many friends, and above all the friend of my youth. His vivid

[79] William Morris. *Art and Socialism*. A lecture to the Leicester Secular Society. 23 January 1884.
[80] Ibid.

> nature & ardent love of beauty made their impression on my soul just in its most impressionable time, so that he has always been an imposing figure in my mind, much he gave me, & I cd. honour & love him even when I differed utterly from him. Some of the notices and paragraphs about him have been charming: of course there was much to say of him. Among many other characteristic qualities was an unfailing purity & grace.[81]

Morris may have influenced Lushington but did Lushington and his Positivism influence Morris? The friendship of this pair is particularly interesting as Lushington was one of the few Positivists to have a close relationship with Morris. That relationship is brought to life in a series of previously unknown letters from Lushington to his daughters written in the 1880s and 90s which have fortunately survived in the archive. These letters, in which Lushington describes various visits to Kelmscott Manor, provide new important insights into the life of Morris and his family and have already created much interest among those interested in Morris. One example is a letter in which Lushington writes of Morris's plans to set up the Kelmscott Press and to publish not only his own works but also a volume by Wilfred Blunt. This letter also contains rare references to the epilepsy suffered by Morris's younger daughter – a subject which her family tried to avoid discussing.[82]

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[81] Vernon to Susan Lushington. (October 1896) SHC 7854/7/1-2.

[82] Vernon to Kitty Lushington. Thursday 8 October (no year but probably 1891), "One day I went over to Kelmscott, by appointment. A beautiful day it was & I walked from Lechlade by the riverside. Had I looked out very sharp – but it needed that for it is easy to be hid under the bank – I shd, have seen the Poet in a boat fishing with Jenny for his mate. They came home in due time with 19 perch & a lot of gudgeon – I meanwhile having had a good long household talk with Mrs Morris about him & about Jenny, & about <u>you</u> & many other things. She spoke with pleasure at having had a letter (or 2 was it?) from you & asked most kindly all particulars. She gave a good account of her husband. He has shaken off his bad attack of gout: & certainly I never saw him more cheerful, he is full of plans,

Although Lushington's letters are rich in anecdotal material concerning Morris there are no direct references to Positivism. However, there is one intriguing reference to Lushington and Morris "discussing the Revolution & I know not what besides."[83] Lushington was one of the few Positivists who were close to Morris but did he influence him with his Positivist ideas? Given that Morris's brand of Socialism was for "Revolution" it is unlikely that this was so even though the two men shared similar goals in areas of social improvement and, some years earlier, Lushington had called himself "a Socialist."[84] Lushington's new society would be obtained by moral rather than political means and education would be the key. Despite their differences, Lushington was quite happy for his daughters to be exposed to Morris's politics and wrote to his eldest daughter Kitty as she set off on a visit to Kelmscott Manor, "Don't forget to ask William Morris for a list of Books to read about Socialism."[85]

& performances, & abounding talk. He is just now printing his own poems (a new volume) with his own type – he has 6 printers at work for him! & he is going to print some poems for Mr Blunt besides Caxton's Golden Legend, a Chaucer & all his books are taken up beforehand by the publishers, so as he said "they cost me nothing". Jenny, you know was terribly ill in the spring & some of the doctors thought it might clear off the whole malady, & she wd. have no more attacks – as dear Mrs Morris said. This was too good to be true - & poor Jenny has had one or two slight attacks since, so that they are very anxious for her & have a nurse in the house. They are going to take her to the seaside this winter. I thought her much as she generally seems to me. Maybe she is a little rough sometimes, a little blunt I mean, but she always make good decisive talk – this time it was about books & what she had seen in a delightful little tour this summer with her father in North France – Beauvais, Laon, Soissons & etc. Mrs Morris herself, I thought fairly well. Of course this wet summer has not been good for her. We all dined together midday (like the English of old Wm Morris is so fond of) & he produced some good light still wine he had got near Rheims, which we drank in high art Tumblers! Then we walked out to riverside & to the ford, where 400 years ago "the Duke of Oxford" fought & was beaten by Bolingbroke. There's a piece of history for you. Afterwards W.M. & Jenny started me on my way homewards & I looked up to Lechlade Spire in the sunset sky, as Shelley did 'summer evening' in 1815. See his Stanzas."
At Oxford Station that morning I had met Wilfred Blunt himself – he had been to Kelmscott at half past six – there he was sitting on a bench studying the M.S. of his new poems, We had some friendly talk. SHC 7854/7/6-8.

[83] Vernon to Kittle Lushington 1 October, no year. SHC7854/7/2.

[84] Lushington to Richard Monkton Milnes, 12 October 1862. Houghton 15/113-4, Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

[85] Vernon to Kitty Lushington, 24 September, no year. SHC 7854/7/2.

As a Positivist, Lushington would have agreed with Comte that the working classes were "unfit for political office and must abandon the demand for rights, including the vote".[86] Lushington also dismissed what he called "the absurd & revolutionary doctrine of the Equality of Man."[87] Lushington's extreme views as an anti-democrat ran quite contrary to Morris's ideals and had moved far from the Christian Socialism of his early years at Cambridge. However it was not that Lushington was unsympathetic to the lot of the working classes. If that had been the case he would not have participated in the Working Men's College or offered his help to the trade unions. What Lushington held was a contrary view of society in which birth was central both with regard to gender issues [in particular the place of women] and social standing. Lushington believed that the destiny of a man or women lay in his or her birth. Like Comte he was hearkening back to the golden age of the feudal system of the Middle Ages. In a paper on "The State" Lushington wrote with some admiration of the caste system which "existed and prospered for thousands of years in the secluded valleys of the Nile, the Euphrates & the Ganges …the most completely ordered state of society which the human record shows."[88] It was in such an "ordered state" that Lushington believed the future of Humanity lay. Just as the Positivists saw women as inferior intellectually but superior morally, so the working man who accepts his position would "be favourably situated for the reception of comprehensive principles and generous sympathies."[89]

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[86] Auguste Comte, *System of Positive Polity, Vol.1.*
[87] Lushington, *The State* (manuscript in my possession).
[88] Ibid.
[89] *A General View of Positivism* p. 95

The idealistic Comte believed that the working classes were not destined for political power. Instead he believed that they would become a most important source of moral power. He also believed that it would be "among the Working Classes that the new philosophers will find their most energetic allies."[90] In other words he somewhat naively believed that the working classes would willingly submit to a benevolent ruling class. Moreover Comte was of the opinion that "the occupations of working men are evidently far more conducive to philosophical views than those of the middle classes".[91] However that is far as it went. "The life of the workman" may have been "far more favourable to the development of the nobler instincts" but a class structure was required in order to maintain a stable society. Lushington believed that in the Positivist view the relation of Master & Servant was one of the fundamental relations of human society, and was to be honoured accordingly.

Morris would not have agreed with Lushington who, after describing the Republic of Plato as, "a Republic bounded on the equality of the sexes, identity of employments, community of property & community of women & children", hastened to add "Happily the World has been wise enough not to follow his advice!" [92] Morris's "revolution" would have produced a new political, social and economic order whilst that of Lushington and his Positivist friends was essentially intellectual and spiritual. The Positivists saw insurrection as a dangerous remedy, reserved only for extreme cases.

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[90] Ibid p. 94.
[91] Ibid p. 94
[92] This passage is taken from Lushington's manuscript lecture *Women* dated 8 June 1879 in my possession.

Following his decision not to pursue a career in the Church, Morris became reluctant to discuss religion and considered himself to be "careless of metaphysics and religion." [93] However, it is impossible to believe that Lushington never raised the subject of Positivism with Morris especially when discussing "the Revolution". Although Morris chose to pursue his crusade for social change through politics there is an intriguing reference to the Religion of Humanity in his *News From Nowhere* in which he writes, "In times past men were told to love their kind, to believe in the religion of humanity and so forth" but were immediately repelled by the hideousness of the individuals who made up the mass they were supposed to worship. He goes on to suggest that this could only be overcome "by making a conventional abstraction of mankind that had little or no actual relation to the race."[94] Wright has commented, "Quite how ironic Morris is being is not certain. In a sense he is voicing an obvious objection to the Religion of Humanity. But he does seem to take it seriously as a possible religion of the future."[95] Charles Kegel has pointed out that in Morris's sagas, "the Gods were men and recognisable as such."[96] This appears to be an echo both of Carlyle and his Heroes and Comte with his Calendar of Great Men.

Morris was invited to attend the festivities surrounding the opening of Newton Hall, the Positivists' meeting room, in 1881 where the guest of honour was to be Pierre Laffitte, Comte's successor in Paris. Morris declined with the rather feeble excuse that his French was not good enough, although he hoped to visit Newton Hall

[93] John Hollow, 'William Morris and the Judgement of God' *The Publications of the Modern Language Association of* America, Vol. LXXXVI (May 1971), 446-451 (p. 446).
[94] William Morris *News From Nowhere*. Quoted in Wright p. 135.
[95] Wright p. 135.
[96] Charles H. Kegel, 'William Morris and the Religion of Fellowship', *Western Humanities Review*, XII (Summer 1958), 233-239 (p. 237).

another time to view its historic fabric.[97] When Mackail's *Life of William Morris* was published in 1899 Lushington wrote to his daughter Susan, "very good it is: even the Socialist part is full of interesting matter to me." However he then takes Mackail to task for his "curious silence" on "Comte's statement of the problem & its solution. He never seems to have heard of it, - & goes off headlong after that will of the wisp, - abolition of private ownership."[98] An interesting rider to this observation is found in a letter which Lushington wrote after a visit to Kelmscott Manor in 1899. Lushington recorded that during a conversation with Jenny Morris "about Mackail's Life of her Father" she said she had not read it and "her mother thought it might have been better. I was prudent & I did not pursue the subject."[99]

However there were areas in which Lushington and Morris found a meeting of minds. Both had a social conscience and both felt passionate in areas relating to the Arts and the state of nineteenth-century Britain. The following lines from Lushington's additional notes could have come direct from the pen of Morris:

> When in England machinery is no longer allowed, by the force of cultivated taste and opinion, to intrude into the domain of art manufactures … which belongs exclusively to the trained mind & cunning hand of individual workmen, wealth will become more equally diffused throughout society, and the working classes, thro' the elevating influence of their daily work, &

[97] Morris to Frederic Harrison, 30 April 1881, Cornell University.
[98] Vernon to Susan Lushington , 13 October 1899. SHC 7854/7/2. This was clearly an area where the Positivists and the Socialists did have distinctly differing views. Comte considered that in matters such as this "The regulations required should be moral, not political in their source." (A General View of Positivism , Chapter III, The Action of Positivism on the People)
[99] Vernon to Susan Lushington , 4 October 1899. SHC 7854/7/2.

> growing respect for their talent & skill & culture, will at once rise in social, civil & political position, raising the whole country, to the highest classes, with them.

Among some miscellaneous notes labelled "Morris" in the Lushington archive is a sheet on which Lushington has written; "Morris. Not Comte – but ½ a Positivist". Under this Lushington lists the following headings as areas in which be believed Morris expressed the Positivist view. These were: "Poetry, Architecture, Decorative Arts, Socialism and Lectures on Art – art for all, nature, history & appeal to craftsmen." Lushington's notes on Morris also contain the following quotation from Comte's "General View of Positivism", "To renew the aesthetic movement so admirably begun in the Middle Ages, but interrupted by classical influences, will form part of the great work which Positivism has undertaken." Although Lushington recognised that his old friend was not a Positivist, he considered that many of the ideals that he was advocating and the work he was undertaking were wholly in accord with Comte's vision.

Lushington and Morris may have had differed in their understanding of the nature of the "Revolution" and how it was to be achieved in bringing about social change, but they did find a strong commonality of interest and purpose in architecture and the preservation of old buildings through the founding of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings or "Anti-Scrape" as it was affectionately known.

"Anti-Scrape"

It was Morris's concern at the damage being done to England's ancient parish churches and cathedrals by over zealous, or inappropriate, restoration that led him to form The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings in 1871. Inevitably the strong aesthetic motivation of the Society drew Lushington to join his old friend in this particular crusade and he became a committee member in 1878. Lushington always acknowledged the debt he owed to Morris in this respect and, when visiting the Cotswold village of Fairford some years later, he wrote, "Of course I think of William Morris all day. What a lot he taught us to like & love. I see signs of his lesson being learnt on several hands, but the Philistine – the unknown & unknowable Philistines & Pharisees are very numerous."[100] Yet even within "Anti-Scrape" Lushington found an outworking for his Positivist beliefs.

Comte had written of the three arts "which present simultaneous impressions", these being Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Although he considered Architecture to be the less aesthetic because it was "far more dependant on technical processes; and indeed most of its productions are rather works of industry than works of art"[101] he continued:

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[100] Lushington once witnessed one of Morris's well known out bursts of rage at the damage done by over zealous and misguided church restorers – in this case at Kelmscott itself. He wrote to his daughter Kitty, "[Morris] showed me Kelmscott Church & there I saw a bit of his choleric nature. We found a man there replastering the wall at the East End. W.M. asked him a few angry questions & then said to me "This will cost the Parson £5. I shall withdraw my Subscription. I shall charge him with Perfidy!" I forgot to say that in the evening we played 20 questions. I had to guess "the blade of the guillotine that slew Danton." Vernon to Kitty Lushington. 4 October, (no year) SHC 7854 /7/6-8.
[101] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 216.

> But the impressions conveyed by it [architecture] are so powerful and so permanent, that it will always retain its place among the fine arts, especially in the case of great public buildings, which stand out as the most imposing record of each successive phase of social development.[102]

For Comte, history was the great educator of humanity and one could have no idea of humanity without referring to history. For Comte history was progression and the past was a series of building blocks towards the future. In the development of his thesis of the three ages of humanity, Comte placed great stress on the special place that the Roman Catholic Church played in the early Middle Ages. Comte particularly appreciated the beauty of the great cathedrals "in which the spirit of the Middle Ages has been idealised and preserved for posterity. They exhibit in a most striking manner the property which Architecture possesses of bringing all the arts together into a common centre."[103] It was in the Middle Ages that Comte believed that the aesthetic movement was at its peak and after being "interrupted by classical influences, [it] will form a part of the great work which Positivism has undertaken - the completion and re-establishment of the Medieval structure upon a firmer intellectual basis."[104]

Lushington was an active member of SPAB and was called upon to assist from time to time in matters of a legal nature. One such matter was the threat which arose in 1899 to destroy historic properties as part of a scheme to widen Fleet Street. The

[102] Ibid. p. 217.
[103] Ibid. p. 217
[104] Ibid. p. 220.

buildings in question were part of the Temple complex, Lushington, on behalf of SPAB, successfully took up the matter with the Treasurer of the Temple.[105]

Lushington joined the Society's governing committee the year after it was founded and he was sometimes called upon to chair the Society's meetings in London. When presenting the Society's Annual Report in 1892 he was unable to resist the opportunity to add a further, and deeper, meaning to their work. In emphasising a view, which had also been expressed by Comte that it was in the Middle Ages that "building art was in its highest excellence." Lushington went on to speak of the importance of a proper understanding of the past, something, again, that lay at the heart of Positivism:

> One of the aspects in the work of this Society which most interests me is this: its connection with what I may call the modern historical spirit, that is to say, careful interest in the study of the past, and on a great scale piety towards the past … This disposition I know is often followed in a narrow, sectional, parochial spirit, but it need not be so; and on a broad view, when we remember all that we owe to the past, I consider that it is a most reasonable spirit, and quite one of the most important current thoughts of our time.[106]

[105] The papers relating to this episode are held in the archives of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, London.
[106] Annual Report of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings held at Barnard's Inn on 28 June 1892.

When explaining his view that the development of society could only be properly understood through a full understanding of history, Comte had termed the first stage of humanity as the "Fetishist". In his lecture on Positivism and Art Lushington had stated that "Positivism not only owns and honours these rude forefathers of the race: it systematically recognises the fetichistic temper as the disposition that is to personify things as persisting under all the subsequent systems."[107] However Lushington went on to ask:

> Has the age in which we live any real care for outward beauty, or for the arts which illustrate outward beauty, or for the historical associations which are ofttimes so very deeply bound up with the beautiful and ancient monuments … Once there *was* beautiful architecture in England, as in other countries, and a fine race of art workmen animated by the Catholic spirit, which encouraged everywhere a free hand, recognising, as it did, the dignity and independence of every living soul.[108]

In endorsing the ideology of William Morris, who viewed the true craftsman with an elevated idealism expressed in both the beauty of the objects he produced and in the real satisfaction that this provided him in his daily labours, Lushington was also expressing a Comtean concern "of the desperate struggle for existence wh. oppresses

[107] Lushington, *Art.*
[108] Ibid.

the life & crushes the very soul out of the … working man."[109] Such a view was close to that held by Lushington's friend John Ruskin.

Throughout his lecture Lushington moralised and drew on Comtean ideals and expressions such as "the general want of feeling" regarding historic buildings and the once "Catholic spirit" in England "which encouraged everywhere a free hand , recognising, as it did, the dignity and independence of every living soul." Lushington exclaimed that when Christianity became the state religion "its leaders urged the Emperors to destroy all pagan temples and images."[110] This led to the "havoc of inestimable beauty." But he also noted that even the monotheistic creeds which could tolerate no rival were unable to destroy the seeds which later grew into the great gothic flowering of the Middle Ages that found expression in the "glorious Cathedrals & Churches."[111]

Later, in acknowledging the progress that was being made as a result of the work of SPAB, particularly within the Church, Lushington, although an unbeliever, duly recognised the significance of the work of the Tractarians and others in restoring churches:

> The church has felt this spirit of revival, as you know, very strongly. Do I object to that? Quite otherwise, many of you most sincerely agree with the general doctrines of the church. I cannot claim this for myself, but I still

[109] Ibid.
[110] Ibid.
[111] Ibid.

> consider that all persons are bound to respect and sympathise in the great movement that has been going on in the Church of England and the Catholic Church generally, towards once more making worship beautiful, and making the house of God beautiful.[112]

Lushington was not only the only Positivist to support Morris in his crusade to preserve ancient buildings. In 1887 Frederic Harrison had addressed the Society deploring the alterations being made in Westminster Abbey for the Queen's Jubilee which he saw as another threat to the city's "sacred" heritage.[113]

The idealism of Morris did find common ground through the working of the Society of the Protection of Ancient Buildings. However, despite a fruitful and cooperative friendship over many years, the relationship of Lushington and Morris is now best remembered in the context of its flowering when, as university students they first made contact with Rossetti and other members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood. Consideration will now be given as to whether there was a hidden agenda in his promotion of the work of the PRB and whether there are any common themes to be found in the artists' idealism and the Religion of Humanity.

The Age of Chivalry

[112] Ibid.
[113] Vogeler, p.207.

There is a master theme that links the PRB, Ruskin, Morris, and even Carlyle, to Comte. This is a shared a reverence for the Middle Ages. Wright noted that, "Comte particularly admired the development of chivalry under medieval Catholicism, bringing with it the emancipation of serfs as well as women, involving a 'true sense of the social dignity of labour' and inculcating in the strong a sense of responsibility for the weak.' He also extolled the aesthetic impact of the Middle Ages, especially their cathedrals, 'those religious edifices which are the most perfect monumental expression of the ideas and feeling of our moral nature' … He was a fervent admirer of Dante."[114]

There was no visible expression of Positivism such as a school of "positivist painters" or "positivist writers" and, in any event, such schools were never envisaged by Comte. What he and his followers sought was to see every area of life touched by the Religion of Humanity. Comte's influence did begin to permeate the literary world of the second half of the nineteenth century and even Thomas Hardy and George Eliot were accused of writing novels of a positivist nature.[115] But what of painting? Were Rossetti and the Pre-Raphaelites influenced by Comte or was it co-incidental that their new style emerged at this time? There is no evidence that any

[114] Wright, p. 28.

[115] Susan Lushington recorded in her diary on 2 April 1894 that "Gertrude [Bell] gave me a story of Hardy's to read but I was absolutely scandalized with it. It was hatefully improper from beginning to end – and not the least interesting or clever – immorality, fine and simple, is so cheap. It has gone on since the world began & will go on till the end & if you have got nothing new to say about it, you had much better not say anything about it at all. I was horrified & so disappointed too as it is the first thing of his I had ever read." Diary in my possession.

of these artists studied Comte. However Vogeler has noted that "the spell of the romantic medievalism" was common to both Comte and Carlyle.[116]

William Gaunt described Pre-Raphaelitism as a "reform and a dream … real and unreal … modern but in the Middle Ages". It was also an expression of the spirit of 1848, the year of revolutions. There was a general fascination with the Middle Ages in the Victorian era and Tosh has pointed out, "For some Victorians the Middle Ages provided not only an alternative perspective on the present, but practical means for mitigating its harshest features."[117] Ruskin, Morris, Rossetti and others all looked back to the Age of Chivalry believing it to hold qualities which had much to offer the nineteenth century. Thomas Carlyle also, in his *Past and Present*, harkens back to the golden period of the Middle Ages. In this they were, perhaps unconsciously, reflecting Comte who must also be considered Romantic with his emphasis on feeling and his idealisation of the Middle Ages, a period of history which believed to have much to offer the nineteenth century.[118]

Lushington also reflected back the Golden Age when he composed these verses for a Positivist Marriage ceremony using full chivalristic language to address the groom:

> Thou, Brother, on this grace
> Hast here declared thy part:

[116] Vogeler, p. 31.
[117] John Tosh, *Why History Matters* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p.30.
[118] See *Auguste Comte and The Middle Ages* a lecture by the American Positivist Henry Edger given in Pozsony (Presburg) on 5 September 1885. Musée de August Comte, Paris.

Though loving peace and all out race

Soldier and knight thou art!

Thou shalt not quit the rank for fear,

Thou shalt be brave and true:

Thy chosen life thou shalt revere,

And knightly duty do.

Oh, say, amist our modern men

A true man thou wilt be,

True to thyself and bretheren,

Serving Humanity.

We are thy comrades in the strife;

We too the promise give,

Since we from others hold our life,

We will for others live.[119]

This is an extraordinary set of verses for use at a wedding given that they appear to have more to do with the values of brotherhood and male comradeship rather than the union of the man and woman which was being created and celebrated. It is a call to the man to take his dominant role within the very unequal union that was taking place. It is reminiscent of the sentiment which Lushington expressed to his fiancée on the eve of their wedding when he wrote of his service to Humanity taking

[119] From a printed order of service prepared by Frederic Harrison for the marriage of Frederick Charles Freeman and Faith Flaxman Wright in 1887. Musée de Auguste Comte, Paris.

precedence over all else.[120] Elsewhere Lushington wrote, "the soul of … Chivalry was the Worship of Woman" and it was this that "inspired the sacred Poet Dante."[121]

In his verses on the "Commemoration of Auguste Comte", Lushington expressed this idea of the continuity of chivalry to modern times when he wrote:

> Pope and priest and knightly creed,
> And their loving works and ways:
> These, *and* modern truth and deed
> (Not mere freedom!) thou didst praise.
> So in linked order fair
> Human lore thou didst ordain;
> And the ages did appear
> Joined in a majestic chain.

In his lecture on Mozart, Lushington wrote that, "Modern Civilization issues direct from Medieval Civilization."[122] This theme runs through his essay on "Two Pictures", which he wrote for the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. Here Lushington seeks for visible expressions of the Religion of Humanity within the work of the Pre-Raphaelite artists.

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[120] This letter will be discussed in the context of Lushington's relationship with his wife and family in the following chapter.
[121] Lushington, *Women*.
[122] Lushington, *Mozart: A Commemorative Address*, (London: Reeves and Turner, 196, Strand, 1883), p. 5.

"Two Pictures"

Lushington chose two iconic Pre-Raphaelite paintings for his essay. These were Rossetti's 'Dante's Vision of Beatrice' and Madox Brown's 'The Last of England'. The choice of these paintings is likely to have had some significance given the subjects and the deep symbolism which they each contained. Rossetti's painting depicts the distraught Dante mourning his beloved Beatrice and Brown's work shows a young man and woman emigrating from England to seek for a new life. Lushington devotes much of his essay to the role of the woman in each picture and it is here that his Positivism again emerges. Although Positivists believed that women were intellectually inferior to men they also believed that they were morally superior.[123] Lushington wrote:

> The worship of the Virgin Mother is also recorded for us in the book which to Positivists, and to all who know it, is the most precious monument in the literature of Catholicism, - the great poem of Dante.[124]

Rossetti's painting depicted the veneration of Dante for the dead Beatrice. Dante was regarded highly by Comte and the Positivists as exemplifying a time when humanity had reached a peak before the collapse of Catholicism in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Beatrice was the symbol and representative of idealised

[123] "Women's minds no doubt are less capable than ours of generalizing very widely, or of carrying on long processes of deduction. They are, that is, less capable of than men of abstract intellectual exertion." *A General View of Positivism* p. 166.
[124] Lushington, *Art*.

womanhood. Lushington wrote how the chivalric age "announced the universal mission of Woman."[125]

In describing 'The Last of England' Lushington spends much of his essay on describing the virtues of the young woman who is seated next to her husband on the deck of boat as they leave England to start a new life in a new country. [126] For Lushington the woman epitomised perfect motherhood and interestingly he notes a feature that might easily be overlooked by the casual observer. This is how her left hand is "clasping yet another hand – a tiny one, the hand of their first born!" Of the husband Lushington notes that his face is that "of a man of some five-and –twenty years, evidently a 'gentleman'; bred in all the comforts and refined ways of 'good society' … He has a mind too; we read quick sympathies of thought in that thin face, those keen restless features, and think that he, like many a young Englishman, has had his speculations about Religion and Politics."[127]

However, having considered the husband [modelled on Thomas Woolner] – a man with whom Lushington seems to have felt a deep sympathy and identification – he continues "But it is on *her* that our eye chiefly dwells … Her thoughts are elsewhere, far away; not with the rough present, not with the dim future, but in the

[125] Lushington, *Women*.
[126]The painting is said to have been inspired by the departure of Thomas Woolner as an emigrant to Australia to follow the gold rush in July 1852. Woolner returned the following year without his hoped for fortune.
[127] Lushington, *Two Pictures*, The Oxford & Cambridge Magazine, 1857.

sacred Past."[128] Here again Lushington picks up a theme common to both Positivism and the Pre-Raphaelites – the sacredness of the past.

This sacredness of the past had been a theme which Lushington had noted in his essay on Carlyle who believed that the "Present contains the whole Past and the whole Future". Werner, in her *Pre-Raphaelite Painting and Nineteenth-Century Realism*, makes a strong argument for a previously unrecognised role which Carlyle played in proving the young painters with what she calls "an artistic philosophy". Importantly, she credits Lushington as being the first to express this and lay out their "credo" in his essay in the *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine*. However, although Carlyle is the subject of Lushington's essay, the influence of Comte at this time (1856) was never far away as evidenced by Godfrey Lushington's essay on *Oxford* published in the April edition of *The Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* in which he writes, "Let no man on the score of religion refuse to listen to the historical theories of Comte." [129]

Art for Art's Sake?[130]

Within Positivism the arts were to play a defining role. But Positivism was not a collection of rules and dictates, rather it was a more an attempt to provide a general

[128] Ibid.
[129] Godfrey Lushington, "Oxford", *Oxford and Cambridge Magazine* April 1856 p. 251.
[130] "Art for art's sake" is an English rendition of a French slogan attributed to Theophile Gautier (1811-1872). Whistler expressed this in a more colourful way when he wrote "Art should be independent of all claptrap – should stand alone, and appeal to the artistic sense of eye and ear, without confounding things with emotions entirely foreign to it, as devotion, pity, love, patriotism, and the like." E.R. Pennell & J. Pennell, *The Life of James McNeill Whistler* (William Heinemann, London, 1911) I, p.292

philosophical understanding of the history of humanity and an objective view of its progress. One of the reasons that Lushington and others broke away from Congreve and began their own meetings at Newton Hall was their belief that it was through education that the Positivist age would be ushered in. They criticised Congreve for becoming too liturgical even though they eventually adopted a form of worship with the use of prayers and hymns. Comte himself had earlier stated:

> When the Positivist education has extended sufficiently to the People of the West, poets and musicians will arise, as in many cases they have already arisen to give expression to its own spiritual aspirations. But independently of what may be due to individual efforts, the People as a whole has an indirect but most important influence upon the Progress of Art, from the fact of being the principal source of language.[131]

This emphasis on education - a particular hallmark of the English Positivists - was so that mankind could fully understand those value systems which would bring about a full recognition of the apotheosis of humanity. Positivism sought to find Comte's ideology within new and existing works of art and literature. The Positivist Calendar gave recognition of the contribution of historical figures, chiefly from Western Europe, who Comte considered had influenced for good the progress of humanity.

Lushington's approach to the arts with his Positivist lens meant that he was always looking for evidence of Comte's philosophy in the Arts. This has been seen in his

[131] *A General View of Positivism* p. 214.

critical discussion of the two Pre-Raphaelite paintings. Although no actual reference is made to Positivism in his *Oxford and Cambridge* essay because he was probably still formulating his own ideas at that time, what Lushington did highlight in those paintings were clearly attributes of the Religion of Humanity. Twenty years after "Two Paintings" Lushington was a fully fledged Positivist and felt able to assess the life and work of Mozart and recognise his place within the Religion of Humanity. Thus, also at this time, he was reviewing the work of Walt Whitman to see what he could add to the Positivist age. In his critique of William Morris's lectures and writings Lushington referred to his old friend as "half a positivist", and, with regard to Ruskin, Susan Lushington believed that the *The Lamp of Memory* in *The Seven Lamps* as being "quite positivistical".[132]

Lushington also believed that, in time, Positivism would produce its own artists.

> For the production of high art we need not fear. They will come. The unlovely conditions which now press so heavily on Artists will pass away. If

[132] Susan Lushington's diary, 27 May 1887. In was not only in the Arts that Lushington looked for signs of Positivism. The Lushington archive also contains brief notes for a possible lecture on Charles Darwin. Of Darwin Lushington wrote "I knew & loved the man & have very tender memories of the man … It was my great good fortune to be admitted into his family upon terms of familiar friendship; & I had the opportunity from time to time of seeing how he was beloved & honoured in his home circle, & with what good cause. The beauty of his character no less than its strength is universally acknowledged." In this lecture Lushington relates that Darwin's theory of "Men descended from Monkeys" would have been something that "Comte wd. have recognised." A full discussion of Darwin and Positivism can be found in Dixon, chapter 4, pp. 129-180, "The Darwinian Conscience." The similarity between Positivists and Darwinian evolutionists was parodied by Mortimer Collins when he wrote:

> *There was an APE in the days that were earlier;*
> *Centuries passed, and his hair became curlier;*
> *Centuries more gave a thumb to his wrist –*
> *Then he was MAN and a Positivist.*

Mortimer Collins, *The British Birds: A Communication from the Ghost of Aristophanes* (1872), p.76. See also Dixon (2008) pp. 133-4.

> Catholicism could produce its Dante, its Raphael & many more, we may trust to the loving genius of the Religion of Humanity.[133]

In the middle of the nineteenth century there appeared a call for "Art for Art's Sake". This slogan was raised in defiance of those who, like John Ruskin, believed that the value of art was to serve some moral or didactic purpose. Those who took up the slogan believed that art was valuable as art and that artistic pursuits were their own justification and that art did not need moral justification. The slogan was adopted by those in the Aesthetic Movement - a rebellion against Victorian moralism. Lushington's friend Burne-Jones did not believe that art was a moral instrument of any kind. Instead he believed beauty to be an essential element without which human nature was diminished.[134]

In 1865, Lushington wrote to his fiancée:

> For indeed whatever Jean Elliott said … of Music, that it has no relation to goodness, is the saddest of errors. Music and Art, and Nature, & whatever is lovely in this world, have a true message to us of Love, which means & includes <u>all</u> good; and if we do not receive good from them, it is wholly our fault or our misfortune. This truth goes to the very root of all judgement of

[133] Lushington, *The Position of Art in the Positivist System*. Manuscript in my possession.
[134] Fiona MacCarthy has drawn my attention to the following in a letter from Burne-Jones to May Gaskell and quoted by C. Monkhouse in an *Exhibition of Drawings and Studies by Sir Edward Burne-Jones, Bart*, 1899. vii "I mean by a picture a beautiful romantic dream of something that never was, never will be – in a light better than any light that ever shone – in a land no one can define or remember, only desire – and the forms divinely beautiful." See also Penelope Fitzgerald, *Edward Burne-Jones* (Michael Joseph Ltd. 1975).

men & things: Carlyle brought it home to my mind (little as it might seem he has to do with such subjects); & evermore shall I be grateful to him for it.[135]

Gautier's proposal of "Art for Art's Sake" was the very antithesis of Positivism. Lushington saw the arts providing people with a source of moral inspiration. In his lecture on Mozart, Lushington wrote:

. Art for Art's sake is certainly no doctrine of ours. Any such claim is extravagant and immoral, and any corresponding attempt must end in the degeneracy of the Arts themselves, as the decline of Greek civilization shows, and the Renaissance movement too, and many sad instances.[136]

Through his very active participation in, and promotion of, the Arts, Lushington practically demonstrated his own Positivist belief of "Art for Society's sake".

[135] SHC 7857/Box3/1. Vernon Lushington to Jane Mowatt, 8 February 1865.
[136] Lushington, *Mozart* p. 15. Despite this statement Lushington once expressed to his daughter Kitty in acknowledging a birthday gift of a "little book on Whistler", who must surely be regarded as a leading exponent of "Art for Art's Sake", that he "found a good measure of pleasure in it" and that he liked "to know the queer facts of his life & behaviour, & like also to see the full claims for his merits set out by a friend, for truth I have always held a sneaking admiration for him, & have longed for more." From an undated letter in the West Sussex Record Office, Maxse Papers 432/223.

- 8 -

Domestic Positivism

In the preceding chapters I have traced Lushington's journey from the harsh pragmatism of Carlyle, which had captured his mind and moulded his thought as a young Cambridge undergraduate, through to the more idealistic Positivism of Comte. It was through his role within the London Positivist group, as well as in his commitment to the altruistic ideal which found particular expression through his social concern and arts related activities, that Lushington showed himself to be an exemplary Positivist. But Positivism was not confined to public life and activity. The Religion of Humanity encompassed every area of life. Lushington was a married man with family responsibilities. How then did Positivism affect his domestic life and his role as husband and father? This chapter will consider these more intimate areas of his life by drawing upon the large amount of family correspondence in the archive.

Lushington's ancestors may have been minor landed gentry, but his choice of an independent profession, freed him from undue patronage and placed him within the context of the newly emerging professional middle class of mid-nineteenth century Britain. It follows that any consideration of Lushington's domestic role must take place within that wider context. A good deal has been written in recent years concerning both nineteenth-century family life and gender roles which has challenged previously accepted concepts. The 1970s saw a re-evaluation of the role

of women in social and domestic history.[1] By way of response, and in a sense to adjust the balance, this was followed by a number of important studies of the role of men, particularly with regard to the issues of "manliness" and "masculinity."[2] These recent studies have led to a re-evaluation of gender relations, rather than the experience of just one sex. As a result "the family could be analysed comprehensively as a system, embracing all levels of power, dependence and intimacy."[3] Such studies help in understanding and contextualising Lushington's character and domestic role. But he was more than just another member of a particular socio-economic group – he was, above all else, a Positivist. This raises the question of how, and to what extent, if any, did nineteenth-century concepts of manliness and masculinity correspond or conflict with the Positivist view.

Comte and his disciples held fixed views on the roles in society of men and women – particularly the latter - and it was Comte's obsessive veneration of women that lay at the heart of his Religion of Humanity. It is because Lushington develops those views that any attempt to understand the broader view of the family life of the Positivist and, more specifically, his own domestic life, requires an explanation of the Positivist view the role of women within society. The archive contains a lengthy

[1] These include Leonore Davidoff & Catherine Hall's *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (London, 1987); M. Jean Peterson's *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* (Indiana University Press, 1989); Eleanor Gordon & Gywneth Nair's *Women, Family and Society in Victorian Britain* (Yale University Press, 2003) and *Gender and Fatherhood in the Nineteenth Century* edited by Trev Lyn Broughton and Helen Rogers (Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

[2] John Tosh's *A Man's Place. Masculinity and the Middle Class Home in Victorian England*, Yale University Press, 1999) and his *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Pearson Longman, 2005) have proved immensely helpful both in understanding Victorian concepts of 'manliness' and proving contemporary profiles against which the character of Lushington can be measured. *Masculinity and Spirituality in Victorian Culture*, edited by A. Bradstock, S. Gill, A. Hogan and S. Morgan, (Macmillan, 2000) also contains material relevant to this chapter.

[3] Tosh, *A Man's Place* p. 2.

paper headed “Women”, produced for the London Positivists, in which Lushington develops Comte’s original thinking as well as dealing with the related matters of marriage and family life.[4]

So often the private lives of men from the past, such as Lushington, remain hidden, only surfacing when they interact with their role in the public sphere. However because the Lushington archive contains a large amount of material that is of an essentially domestic nature it allows access to those areas both of his life and the lives of other family members. The archive has further special interest because it contains both sides of the correspondence between Lushington and his wife from their engagement in 1865 until her death in 1884 at the age of 50. Although much of this correspondence is of a prosaic nature dealing with household management and everyday matters, there are letters which reveal Jane Lushington’s response to her husband’s unorthodox religious views and her struggle for her own identity within the marriage. The Lushington marriage may well have been a union of hearts, but it was not always a union of minds because of their differing religious views.

In the middle years of the nineteenth century, the traditional idea and practice of the unity of work and household where the wife was an informal partner due largely to her legal personality, was rapidly giving way to “a family ideal governed by principles of separate spheres.”[5] In this ideal “family life was elevated in

[4] Lushington, *Women*. Lushington’s views on women were parodied in *Fun*, 12 May 1886, p. 218, in a short poem headed “Unnecessary Advice”.
[5] A. James Hammerton, *Cruelty and Companionship. Conflict in Nineteenth-Century Married Life* (Routledge, London and New York, 1992), p. 71.

importance, and the home, overseen by dependent wives, provided a refuge for husbands, as household heads, from the separate place of work."[6] Samuel Smiles believed that it was only in the domestic sphere that a man's real character, his "manliness", was truly displayed and Carlyle's biographer Froude added that it was only in the home that "we lay aside our mask and drop our tools, and are no longer lawyers, sailors, statesmen, clergymen, but only men."[7]

"manly enthusiasm so rarely mixed with artless woman's tenderness"

In the 1860s manliness was concerned with the inner character of a man and the behaviour which displayed that character in the world around him. It was a word that "implied that there was a single standard of manhood that was expressed in certain physical attributes and moral dispositions."[8] It also implied the qualities of self control, hard work and independence – each of which Lushington exemplified. In a reference to Rugby School, Tosh comments that the marks of "the Arnoldian" were "to put away boyish pursuits, and to grow up straightforward, earnest, and pure." To these could be added "a restless energy, a driving sense of duty, and an absence of frivolity."[9] Although Lushington had not, like his twin brother, been educated at Rugby, he still fits comfortably within this definition. It was Lushington's "restless energy" that had led him first to the Christian Socialists and Carlyle, and then on to

[6] Ibid, p. 71.
[7] Froude, J.A., *The Nemesis of Faith* (1849) as quoted in Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven 1957), pp. 345-6.
[8] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities* p. 2.
[9] John Tosh, 'Domesticity and Manliness in the Victorian Middle Class. The family of Edward White Benson', in *Manful Assertions. Masculinities in Britain since 1800* eds. Michael Roper and John Tosh (Routledge: London and New York), p. 44.

Comte and the Religion of Humanity. Lushington's range of lecture notes are evidence of how that energy was channelled into obsessive research to examine in particular areas of the fine arts and literature through his "Positivist lens", whether it be in great men from the past such as Mozart or in contemporary writers such as Walt Whitman, to seek for indications or expressions of Comte's philosophy and new religion. Lushington demonstrated perfectly a "driving sense of duty" through the various areas of social care and concern which he chose to adopt.

As to "manliness", it was Lushington's friend Munby - a man more usually associated with his bizarre preoccupation with the physical appearance of the working class women of his time – who bestowed that epithet upon Lushington. Munby possessed a keen eye for observing the character of those he met, not only among women of the working classes, which he meticulously recorded in his lengthy journals and diaries. These journals contain a number of astute observations on the character of Lushington such as in 1859 when he noted, "Vernon is a dear old fellow – his devout & earnest talk always does me good." On another occasion Munby recorded reading poetry with Lushington who "read me, in his sweet earnest way, the Poet's Grave: & repeated a manly tender sonnet of his own." In 1864 Lushington visited Munby at his Yorkshire home. Munby records that, "We had glees and duets after tea, and he with my father John & I, sat up smoking and talking of books & men in the schoolroom till late. Vernon was in his happiest mood, and I

ever saw his wonderful charm of manner better displayed: his manly enthusiasm so rarely mixed with artless woman's tenderness."[10]

In this last sentence Munby adds to "manliness" what he calls an "artless woman's tenderness." Emily Davies considered that "whatever is manly must be unwomanly, and vice versa".[11] How could Lushington be both? Manliness at this time did not carry the more masculine and imperialistic overtones that it developed towards the end of the nineteenth century. Moreover in addition to their deep sense of duty to society at large, Arnold and the "new men" of the English middle class also set a high value on domesticity.

Peer-group pressure among men in the public area usually required them to disown their feminine side, but for those from a more fundamental Christian background "Evangelical manhood, with its stress on self sacrifice and influence, came dangerously close to embracing 'feminine qualities'".[12] Religious influence provided an example of a new kind of male identity. William March, a friend of William Wilberforce, was noted for his "tender sensitiveness" and his "almost feminine grace." Evangelical "tender hearted" men were said to be "moved to tears by the Waverley Novels or by the first sight of Norwich Cathedral."[13] Lushington had never been of the evangelical persuasion but even though he had rejected orthodox

[10] Munby, Diaries, 17 March 1864.
[11] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities,* p. 91.
[12] Davidoff & Hall, p. 110.
[13] Ibid.

Christianity he still found the need for religious expression both through the arts and, more obviously by embracing the Religion of Humanity.

Tosh writes that manliness in the mid nineteenth century also "embraced notions of chivalry".[14] Sir Walter Scott was highly regarded by Lushington who considered him an important link between the chivalric idealism of the Middle Ages and a similar idealism at the core of Comte's Positivism. Expression of emotion was not thought to be unmanly. Indeed, it was considered a product of moral earnestness. Thomas Arnold's son, Matthew, who believed that all was "sweetness and light" was once described by his sister as being found "stretched at full length on the sofa, reading a Christian tale of Mrs Gaskell's which moved him to tears, and the tears to complacent admiration of his own sensibility."[15] Lushington's youngest daughter Susan, after hearing her father speak to the London Positivists at Newton Hall, was let to exclaim, "Then dear Father's address. Why – oh why, are we such an emotional family! Both Father, M[argaret] & I were more or less dissolved in tears!"[16]

That Lushington's manliness could extend into what might be considered a more maternal sphere was demonstrated by the pleasures he found spending time with his young family, as this extract from a letter to his wife reveals:

[14] Tosh, *Manliness and Masculinities,* p. 34.
[15] Davidoff & Hall, p. 111.
[16] Diary of Susan Lushington, Sunday 21 November 1891..

> This morning I had quite a long walk with our nursery party – across the park & down the lane to Arthur Lambert's, up the hill, then all thro' Ripley Wood, & across the Park home. Baby in her "peram", Kitty & Margaret afoot (Margaret had one spell in the peram) – 2 nursery maids & 2 dogs (who caught 2 hedgehogs). The children are all 3 looking as bonny as can be & very happy.[17]

This accords with Tosh's examples of other "relaxed and approachable fathers" such as Edward Irving, William Wilberforce and Thomas Arnold. [18]

Earnestness and manly enthusiasm may have been considered desirable qualities for the nineteenth-century male but more important to the Positivists was "sympathy" which, although it might be considered more a feminine attribute, was for them the most decisive of Comte's seven distinct but interdependent characteristics of the Positivist spirit. Those who knew Lushington spoke of his "sweetness and gracious kindness"[19] and his "charming & sympathetic nature" by which "he was ever able to see the good & the best in everyone."[20] Frederic Harrison remembered Lushington's "temper of generous forbearance and loving kindness." [21] The Positivist E.S. Beesly best summed up this aspect of Lushington's character when, in writing an obituary notice of him, recalled "I have never known a nature more sympathetic than that of

[17] Vernon to Jane Lushington, Sunday 20 August 1871. SHC 7854/3/8.
[18] *Domesticity and Manliness*, p. 63.
[19] H.E. Litchfield, Obituary of Vernon Lushington, The Working Men's College Journal,
[20] Lorenzo Rodd to Susan Lushington, SHC 7854/22/17.
[21] *The Positivist Review*, (1, April 1912), p. 93.

our deceased friend."[22] Even the Christian Socialist J.M. Ludlow, who had disagreed with him at times, wrote that it was "the warmth of sympathy which made Vernon so loveable."[23]

Sympathy was related to the Affections and, according to the Positivists, the Affections were best developed, or "trained", by "the study of Western languages, the study of the best Western poetry, and the regular practice … of the beautiful arts of Singing & Drawing"[24] – the very subjects which were closest to Lushington's heart. Lushington was never more at ease than in performing "glees and duets" and in both writing and reciting poetry. His daughter Susan recorded in her diary that she always knew her father to be happy when he was quoting Walt Whitman.

"Humanity's best gift"

The Positivists regarded marriage as "the most powerful instrument of moral education" but for Comte this had nothing to do with the sexual union of two partners as he believed that "all the best results may follow, when the union, though more impassioned, is as chaste as that of brother and sister … abstinence, in cases where there is a real ground for it on both sides, will but serve to strengthen mutual

[22] E.S. Beesly, *The Positivist Review*, (1 March 1912), 65-66 (p. 66).
[23] John Ludlow, *John Ludlow: the autobiography of a Christian Socialist*, ed. A.D. Murray, (London, Cass, 1981), p. 268.
[24] Lushington, *Women*.

affection."[25] This idea probably owed more to his unconsummated relationship with Clotilde de Vaux than any higher motive.

> Bridegroom and Bride, when they enfold,
> Each in the other may behold
> Humanity's best gift. [26]

In these lines from a poem of fourteen verses Lushington reminds the newlyweds that the blessings of marriage will be found in a union made not in a Christian Heaven but rather within the continuity of the history of humanity. It is from that continuity, rather than some supernatural agency, that they must draw their strength.

> Therefore look back! Look back upon
> The makers of this joy, and own
> Your long ancestral line.

Lushington then traces the history of marriage from the earliest of times, including the ancient Egyptians, down through the Roman Empire and the chivalric idealism of the Middle Ages to the present time. Near the end of the poem the bride is thus reminded of her role in the marriage union:

> And praise the Wife, his humble peer,

[25] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 178.
[26] Lushington, *Marriage*.

How without her would labour fare?

How could the Home be Home?

But how can she be the "humble peer" given the severe limitations on what she might do? Her place must be within the home, caring for the children and providing their early education. Lushington's poem ends with a hymn of praise to Comte - "him whose soul, Humanity made beautiful." It was Comte who "fathoming [the] deepest hold of faith, And mystery of love and death / Blest yet again this band."

The Positivists devised their own form of marriage ceremony and, in 1887, Frederic Harrison published *Marriage: A Discourse to the Positivist Society after the Civil Marriage of Frederick Charles Freeman and Faith Flaxman Wright*.[27] Lushington contributed two poems which set out the Positivist view of on the roles of bride and groom. The first addresses the bride:

Women are not lesser men,

Dwelling in affection's bower,

They are joyous queens to men,

Imagining the highest power.

Often as bright angels singing

Thoughts that soar, as Dante knew.

Oft endurance, valour bringing

To the faithful ones who sue.

And the mother rears her own:

[27] A copy of this is in La Musée d' Maison Auguste Comte, Paris.

And the souls of joyous youth
From a mother's lips alone,
Shall receive the holiest truth.
Wealth renouncing, so more bright,
Then the wife draws happy breath;
One with him, her heart's delight,
One in "Faith that looks through death."

Here Lushington sets out the rather cosy but contradictory Positivist view of marriage echoing the chivalric idealism of Dante. On the one hand women are not "lesser men", however, neither are they equal. They are to be as a queen to a king, in other words playing a secondary role in the relationship. When viewed in the light of the masculinist nature of Positivist thought, this regard for women as being spiritually superior seems somewhat contrived and superficial.

The second verse reminds the bride that it will be her place to bring up the children and educate them at home – "From a mother's lips alone". This last line encompassed a view which Lushington and his wife did not adopt. Instead they chose to employ tutors for their three daughters, one of whom was the novelist George Gissing. Not only is the woman to remain at home and teach her offspring, she is also expected to happily renounce her wealth, an idea which ran contrary to the Married Women's Property Act which had come into force just five years earlier.

The second poem is addressed, again in chivalric terms, to the groom who is hailed as "soldier and knight." The second verse of this hymn is particularly interesting.

> Oh, say, amidst our modern men
> A true man thou wilt be,
> True to thyself and bretheren,
> Serving Humanity.
> We are thy comrades in the strife;
> We too the promise give,
> Since we from others hold our life,
> We will for others live.

Here Lushington is saying that the groom will transcend "modern men" as he chooses to serve Humanity by living for others. Whereas the first poem reminded the bride of her place in the relationship, no mention of the bride is made in this second set of verses. Instead, the poem places male comradeship above the marriage relationship. It is in the company his "comrades in the strife" that the groom is to live for others. Lushington had reminded his own bride of this shortly before their marriage.

Another example of a Positivist marriage ceremony is to be found in the union of John and Clara Metcalfe in the village of Brentwood, USA. Here the groom declared to his bride, "I desire to be united with Clara, she being a virgin, in an eternal marriage according to the Positivist doctrine and I beg before the altar raised here of

eternal worship of Humanity to have my engagement of eternal widowhood recorded by the Universal Church." The kneeling bride responded, "I, Clara, being still a virgin, desire to be united with John in eternal marriage, and also beg to have my engagement of eternal widowhood recorded by the Universal Church. The officiate then pronounced, "In the name of Humanity, and by virtue of the authority delegated to me by Auguste Comte, I pronounce you married."[28] There are several significant things within this ceremony. The bride is expected to kneel, but the groom is not. This apparent physical demonstration of the Positivist view of the role of women runs contrary to Comte's declaration that "By marriage [the Man] enters into a voluntary engagement of subordination to Woman for the rest of his life. Thus he completes his moral education."[29] Then there is the matter of the bride's purity. Why is the groom not required to declare his virginity also? Is this because of the Positivist view of the woman's priestly role? Through her purity she would redeem the man. Finally the officiate announces that he acts with the delegated authority of Comte. Had Comte actually agreed to this? He certainly perceived for himself the role as the Grand Pontiff in the new Positivist society.

Whilst it might be supposed that Lushington would have preferred a marriage ceremony on Positivist lines, Jane's scruples, and no doubt those of both her and her husband's family would not allow such a thing. Even Frederic Harrison and his wife Ethel had conceded to their respective families' desire for a church service. Two

[28] Verne Dyson, *The Short-Lived Dream of a Better World "Modern Times" The Founding of Brentwood, L.I., N.Y.* Originally published in the Islip Bulletin, 7 September 1964. Information supplied by Mary Ann Koferi, Local History Room, Brentwood Public Library..
[29] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 180

other leading Positivists, John Henry Bridges and Edward Beesly, also succumbed to parental pressures when it came to their marriage ceremonies.[30]

Just three weeks before their marriage Lushington wrote to his fiancée a remarkable letter in which he attempted to dismiss any differences of opinion which they might have had regarding religious matters. The letter refers to them both attending a church service at which they would both receive the sacrament of Holy Communion. Here the serious young Lushington takes pains to explain how his participation in this event would not compromise his own beliefs.

> Dearest, Be at ease on this point, I will do what I think is right; and this is right to me. To revere your piety, to be with you in your most solemn hours, when you pray & give thanks & worship according to the Faith in which you have been reared, - this is altogether right with me, & shall be my desire & my holy pleasure. I can do it with mind quite at ease. What though I am not quite [with] you in matters of doctrine – in this age of distraction & contradiction. The difference shall not sunder us, does not sunder us. Deep below all forms and terms, there is, I feel it, one faith, one love, one hope, which unites us wholly, tho' I can give it no words. And it is indeed no spirit of mere tolerance that I will share with you tomorrow the Holy Communion as 'tis well called. To be with you then to kneel by your side, to eat of the same bread and drink of the same cup, will be a holy joy to me. And not for your sake alone! Gratefully will I take in memory of the sacred Past, of all

[30] Vogeler, p. 91.

> that has been done for me & my brethren; heart grateful will I try to be for that overflowing happening which now glories my life and yours and I will silently vow as you will, that henceforth we will walk together in newness of life, in singleness of mind, striving to fulfil to the uttermost our duties to one another, to our dear relations & friends, and to that larger world, who whether rich or poor, are our brothers and sisters.[31]

Lushington's sentiments here seem to be as much, if not more, about himself as his wife to be. His repeated use of "I" demonstrates this. He seems anxious to justify how he, who had by this time rejected Christianity, could still participate in what to his fiancée was one of the most sacred moments. He seems not to consider how Jane might be compromising her beliefs in marrying him – a non-believer. Lushington transfers the sacredness of the ceremony from worship of the Christian God to the worship of his bride. To a Christian this was nothing short of blasphemy. Lushington then goes further by justifying the act by referring to "the sacred Past" – a reference to the importance of history in Positivist doctrine – and then by relating not only to himself but also to his "brethren." What follows could almost be read as a pre-nuptial agreement, or more correctly, a pre-nuptial statement on the groom's part, as Jane is reminded of the necessity of their "striving to fulfil to the uttermost" their duties not only to each other but also to their "relations & friends, and to that larger world … who are our brothers & sisters."

[31] Lushington to Jane Mowatt. 4 February 1865. SHC 7854/3/3.

Despite any forebodings which Jane might have experienced regarding her fiancée's distortion of Christian doctrine and his expectations of her as his wife, she married Lushington on the 28 February 1865 at Holy Trinity Church, Westminster. The ceremony followed the conventional Anglican service and the marriage certificate reveals that the officiate was Arthur Penryhn Stanley - an old friend of the family.[32] The choice of Stanley as the officiate was probably at least a minor acknowledgement of the groom's religious scruples. If he could not have a Positivist ceremony then at least let it be performed by a man with broad-church views whose sympathies in both theoretical and academic matters were on the liberal side. Stanley took a great interest in university reform and acted as secretary to the 1850 Royal Commission. This led to the opening of college fellowships and scholarships to competition and the non-enforcement at matriculation of subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles – all areas of concern to Lushington.[33]

The Lushington marriage was celebrated with a typical display of generous philanthropy. All the workmen on the Ockham estate were treated to a "substantial dinner" and every poor person in the village was presented with a pound of tea, two pounds of sugar, and two pounds of cake. All the older men also received "a new round frock and the old ladies a new dress each."[34]

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[32] In a letter dated 4 March 1860 Lushington wrote to Joanna Richardson that he and his brother were to hold a dinner party to which Stanley and the Carlyles had been invited. NLS MS.3990, ff.319-323.
[33] In March 1861 Mrs Gaskell wrote to her daughter Marianne that she was going "to Lambeth Palace with Mr V. Lushington to hear the decision about All Souls College (whether the Fellowships there shall be decided by *merit alone* or by birth & other circumstances). *Godfrey* L. is on the 'merit alone' side along with two other 'fellows', the Warden & other authorities on the opposite. Archbishop of Canterbury to give the decision." *The Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, eds. J.A.V. Chapple & Arthur Pollard, Manchester University Press, 1966).
[34] Surrey Herald, February 1865.

"A true love story it was"

Jane was born in New South Wales, Australia on 24 September 1834. Her father, Francis Mowatt (1803-1891), was Liberal MP for Falmouth (1847-52) and for Cambridge (1854-57).[35] Her mother was Sara Sophia, daughter of Captain Barnes of Romford, Essex, of the East India Company's marine service. Jane's first encounter with Lushington might well have been lifted from the pages of a romantic novel. It took place at a concert in London and the event was often recalled and later celebrated in Arthur Hughes' magnificent portrait of Jane and her three daughters entitled "The Home Quartet". In this painting Jane is shown seated at the piano with the score of "Fidelio" at her feet. Lushington described this meeting to his young friend Harry Seeley shortly after his engagement:

> I must tarry no longer, but tell you my happiness, - that I am engaged to be married. The name of the lady is Miss Jane Mowatt; her father was Member for Cambridge some few years ago. She is 3 years younger that I am, very tall and very fair, - lovely to see and lovely to know, I think!
>
> We came across one another in a charmingly strange manner. On 25th June 1864 my brother & I went to hear Beethoven's Fidelio: next to my brother & next but one to me sat the lady, who when Shrove Tuesday comes, will be my Wife. I had never seen her before, but good luck & good skill – the will

[35] In Australia Francis Mowatt worked for the Customs Department in Sydney. He built a house which stood on the site of the present Government House and is remembered for his love of hunting he having taken out from England a pack of foxhounds with which he hunted kangaroos and dingoes.

finding the way – brought me to know her and so we went from stage to stage till a few days ago, when she became my promised one, - A true love story it was, if I cd. tell you all, & not without ups & downs: but all is well, & our cup of joy is full.

We are going to live in 87 Eccleston Square, that is from about 1st April, for our house won't be ready for us before …. [36]

Lushington was keen to share the joyful news of his engagement with other friends including Mrs Gaskell who wrote in response:

Your news, as you conjectured has given us all great pleasure, for, though we never heard of Miss Mowatt before, your account of her charming qualities makes us feel as if you had indeed drawn a prize; only, please, we want to know ever so much more. Where does she live? How long have you known her, so that we may have a chance of hearing an *impartial* account of one who is going to become the wife of a valued friend?[37]

In a different vein a morose John Ruskin also offered his congratulations but at the same time could not resist the opportunity to refer to his own recent affair of the

[36] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97, 29 January 1865.
[37] Elizabeth Gaskell to Lushington. 11 January 1865, *Further Letters of Mrs Gaskell*, eds. John Chapple & Alan Shelton, Manchester University Press (2000), p. 66.

heart, namely his questionable affection for the young Rose La Touche.[38] After the Lushingtons' wedding Ruskin sent an inscribed copy of *The Ethics of the Dust* which he inscribed to Jane.[39]

Arthur Munby met Jane for the first time just a few months after her marriage. He considered her to be "a frank and charming young woman".[40] On a later meeting, Munby described Jane as "tall and graceful and delicately languid as ever."[41] Amongst Jane's various gifts was a considerable talent for the piano which was especially appreciated by Charles Darwin when she and Vernon visited him at Down House. One of those visits coincided with that of Marinanne North who later wrote of Jane:

> She had the good art of making others shine. Every one wishes to interest her, and to bring out that wondrous smile and look of sympathy on her beautiful face, and I felt that we owed much of the interesting talk of that day to her tact and power of fascination. She also played in her own peculiar way, as if the things she played had been written for her alone by Bach or

[38] William Gaunt in *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* (p. 159) quotes from two letters written from Ruskin to Lushington early in 1865. In the second Ruskin writes "for instance I had a little pet of a girl who was a great deal more than a dog or a cat to me – and she went half mad with religion and nearly died – and now she can't write or think consecutively so that it's just as if she was dead." Neither of these two important letters can now be traced. They must have been read by Gaunt during his stay with Susan Lushington when writing his book.
[39] This book is now owned by me.
[40] Munby, Diary, 7 June 1865.
[41] Ibid., 24 July 1869.

> Handel, while Mr. Darwin rested on the sofa, and made her repeat them over and over, with an enjoyment which was real.[42]

After their wedding, at which the young Arthur Sullivan was the organist,[43] the newly-weds travelled to the West of England for their honeymoon. The earnest groom had written to his bride-to-be that they should take a volume of Carlyle with them to read. This was not such a strange suggestion as it may seem. Serious reading on honeymoon was not an altogether unusual practice. Sidney and Beatrice Webb had spent their honeymoon reading about the history of the co-operative movement, the Barnetts who founded Toynbee Hall spent theirs reading lectures on St Paul's Epistles by F.D. Maurice.[44] John Bridges and his wife read both Plato and Darwin on their honeymoon[45].

"The kind accord of Man and Wife"

Although Jane accepted her husband with his beliefs, tensions inevitably arose and, after her death, at least one of their daughters also demonstrated that she too was not prepared to abandon traditional Christian belief.[46] Given the strains that did surface

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[42] Mrs J.A. Symonds (ed.) *Recollections of A Happy Life being the Autobiography of Marianne North edited by her Sister* (Macmillan and Co., 1894) Vol. II, p. 215.
[43] George Grove to Vernon Lushington, 13 February 1865. SHC 7854 (awaiting full referencing).
[44] Dixon 2008, p. 255.
[45] Liveing, pp. 77, 81.
[46] This was Margaret Lushington who remained a committed member of the Church of England all her life. She and her father had a number of heated discussions concerning matters of belief. In her diary for Tuesday 24 January 1893 she recorded "Father & I discussed religion more peacefully than usual." Diary in my possession.

from time to time in their relationship as husband and wife, how did the Lushingtons' marriage compare with others in the Positivist circle?

In his poem on "Marriage" Lushington emphasises the importance of unity:

> Now praise to all of every age,
> Who wrought for us this heritage
> Of married unity!
> Who won from fierce and wandering strife
> The kind accord of Man and Wife,
> Guarded by Industry.[47]

At face value this appears wholly in accord with the Victorian ideal where "marriage proposals spoke of shared tasks, a working partnership in the years ahead."[48] However in practice it was something quite different. How could the Lushingtons enjoy such a relationship given their opposing religious beliefs?

Frederic Harrison made a successful marriage and his wife Emily shared his Positivism. E.S. Beesly married Emily Crompton who, whilst sharing the Broad Church views of her brother-in-law, the Reverend John Llewelyn Davies, greatly respected Positivism. Another of the early Positivists, J.H. Bridges, married his cousin Susan Torlesse who, unlike Jane Lushington, enthusiastically shared her

[47] Lushington, *Marriage*.
[48] Peterson, p. 165.

husband's altruistic beliefs and even wrote "we both hope to live and work together for others." [49]

An amusing, albeit fictitious, contemporary description of a practising Positivist and his wife can be found in the novel *Robert Elsmere* by Mrs Humphrey Ward who, from a distance, admired Comte's altruism.[50] *Robert Elsmere*, which caused a minor sensation when first published, tells the story of a young Anglican clergyman who, after encountering the writings of the German rationalists, finds himself doubting fundamental doctrines of the church. After renouncing orthodox Christianity but still acknowledging the inspiration of the historic Jesus, Elsmere takes up "constructive liberalism" and gives up everything to help the poor in the slums in the East End of London.[51] Elsmere's subsequent spiritual journey brings him into contact with representatives of the various expressions of faith and belief that were prevalent at the time including a man named Wardlaw, "a devoted and orthodox Comtist" who, like Lushington, had found "an outlet for his philanthropic passion" in social work.[52]

Wardlaw, like Lushington, was a barrister who, gave up his evenings to teaching or committee work. His wife was the daughter of a doctor and a national schoolmistress who, unlike Jane Lushington, shared "the same ardours" as her husband. Wardlaw's "small and struggling practice" led them to reside in "one of the dismal little squares

[49] Dixon 2008, p. 67/Living p. 77).
[50] Mrs Ward was the niece of Matthew Arnold, Lushington's friend and neighbour in Surrey. See also Vogeler p. 212 for discussion of *Robert Elsmere* and Positivism.
[51] Lushington appears to have reached a similar stage as Elsmere in 1860 when, in a letter to Joanna Richardson in which he refers to Jesus, writes "you may remember that our Lord (whom I perhaps oftenest think of as a Man)." NLS MS.3990, ff. 319-323.
[52] Mrs Humphrey Ward, *Robert Elsmere*, John W. Lovell Company (New York, 1889) p. 528

near the Goswell Road". Mrs Wardlaw "tended and taught her children entirely herself". In addition to being a wife and mother, Mrs Wardlaw threw "herself into charity organisation cases, into efforts for the protection of workhouse servants, into the homeliest acts of ministry toward the sick, till her dowdy little figure and her face, which but for the stress of London, of labour, and of poverty, would have had a blunt fresh-coloured dairymaid's charm, became symbols of a divine and sacred helpfulness in the eye of hundreds of straining men and women."[53] The more that Elsmere got to know the Wardlaws:

> the more profound became his admiration for that potent spirit of social help which in our generation Comtism has done so much to develop, even among those of us who are but moderately influenced by Comte's philosophy, and can make nothing of their religion of Humanity. Such was the Wardlaws' commitment to Positivism that they never allowed themselves to breathe even to each other that life might have brighter things to show them than the neighbourhood of the Goswell Road . [54]

Although Mary Ward claimed that there was only one character taken from life in her novel, that being the Oxford philosopher T.H. Green, she could not deny that there were many resemblances to other identifiable people.[55] She probably knew of the Lushingtons through her Uncle Matt - their Cobham neighbour and family

[53] Ibid.
[54] Ibid.
[55] Unpublished letter from Mrs Ward to Stephen Haweis, London, 8 May 1888. Lowell Collection, Houghton Library.

friend.[56] She may have met Vernon through Frederic Harrison leading her to draw upon him for the character of her Mr Wardlaw. The fictitious Wardlaw and Lushington were both barristers who gave their spare time to "teaching or committee work". Much of Lushington's spare time was spent in such activities both at the Working Men's' College and, later, through the London Positivist meetings. Lushington was also a committee man both with the organisation of the London Positivists and his work on behalf of the trade unions. He was also active in supporting his friend William Morris's Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. However there the similarity ceases. Jane Lushington was certainly not a model Positivist wife and neither did she and her husband occupy "one of the dismal little squares near the Goswell Road." Instead they had a house in fashionable Kensington Square and a country home in Surrey. Jane Lushington possessed a caring, compassionate spirit but this owed little if nothing to Comte and the Religion of Humanity and not by any stretch of the imagination was she the "dowdy little figure" of Mrs Ward's Positivist wife.[57]

Turning from fiction to fact, several well-known troubled Victorian marriages, such as those of Carlyles and the Ruskins, have been the subject of study and publication

[56] In her autobiographical book *A Writer's Recollections* Mrs Ward recorded how she met Stephen Lushington in 1869 at a dinner party at the Forresters.

[57] Another literary friend of Lushington's was George Meredith whose home at Box Hill was not far from the Lushington's home at Cobham. Meredith's novel *Beauchamp's Career* features a Positivist character called Vernon Whitfield. Wright in *The Religion of Humanity* writes that Whitfield is an "altruist whose grumpiness and addiction to walking combine with his faith in Humanity to suggest Leslie Stephen as the model." However although Stephen was a keen walker he was never a Positivist and perhaps the use of the name Vernon for this character suggests that he drew, at least in part, upon Lushington.

but those particular unions can hardly be considered the norm.[58] More helpful is Peterson's *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen* in which the author argues persuasively for a revision of traditionally accepted stereotypes of Victorian marriage.[59] Peterson believes that "the central fact of marriage was parity and partnership between husband and wife" and, in support, she cites a number of examples of Victorian marriage proposals which spoke of shared tasks and a working partnership in the years ahead. When Brooke Foss Wescott was ordained a priest he wrote to his fiancée "You too share my work … henceforth I – and you with me, for our lives must be one – are pledged to be … a wholesome example to the flock of Christ." But how applicable was this to the Lushingtons given the Positivist view of women and Jane's inability to embrace her husband's Religion of Humanity?

"Am I not your wife?"

Despite her very real love and commitment to her husband, Jane was never able to adopt his Positivism and she remained an orthodox Christian within the Anglican Communion until her death. There is one particularly revealing letter dealing with their differences which she wrote to her husband in 1871 when he was away from

[58] Two useful studies are Phyllis Rose's, *Parallel Lives, Five Victorian Marriages*, (First Vintage Books, 1984) and Gertrude Himmelfarb's *Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians*, (Ivan R. Dee, 2001).

[59] Peterson's *Family, Love, and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*, (Indiana University Press, 1989) contains a particularly useful chapter entitled "Two Working Together for a Common End" which deals with some of the issues faced by the Lushingtons in their married life.

home attending Positivist meetings in Paris. Having just returned from morning service at Ockham parish church, Jane wrote:

> You have been present to my mind all this morning & all through the service in Ockham Church singing lovely hymns & listening to Mr Neville's thundering tones - & saying & feeling – "Good Lord deliver us" – from what? From many evil things – but also from the very idea – that man is to come first & that the Power that created him – gave him life – the power of loving, the power of thinking & believing- or disbelieving – the joy of sound & sight & etc & etc second – I say no more as I feel the blue waves of my sea do but beat against Willa Park - & are like them thrown back – as fresh & as ready for the next rise as if there were no rock – and as eternal – even you will allow that the rocks will go before the sea someday.[60]

Jane is unable to accept that "man is to come first". The Religion of Humanity, preached and practised by her husband, is considered by her to be evil. Moreover, and in words that seems to echo Arnold's "Dover Beach", she believed that the "blue waves" of her sea of faith, which beat against the rock face of his "Willapark", although initially rebuffed would, given due time, undermine the cliff causing it to ultimately collapse into the sea.[61]

[60] Jane to Vernon Lushington. 24 September 1871. SHC 7854/Box1/7/34.
[61] "Willapark" is the name of headland near Boscastle, Cornwall – a place where the Lushingtons had holidayed.

Lushington disclosed to Harry Seeley that his relationship with Jane in the time leading up their engagement had not been "without ups & downs".[62] Quite what Lushington meant by this is not known. However it is safe to assume that they were due in some measure to his religious beliefs. On the eve of their wedding Lushington had written to Jane "Don't suffer me to make an idol of … even yourself, my precious one. Of me it is required … that I should give my life for others."[63] Frederic Harrison expressed this ideal of self sacrifice in a form of Positivist wedding ceremony which he had devised and to which Lushington had contributed. Harrison wrote:

> But to live for our wives or our husbands, for our children or our household, to the exclusion and forgetfulness of all wider duties, is to live for self in a way, less coarse it may be than the life of the mere individual, but perhaps more injurious to society, more widely at war with the spirit of Humanity.[64]

If Jane Lushington was not the fictitious Mrs Wardlaw, perhaps she might be more readily identified in same the novel with Catherine Elsmere, who as a devoted evangelical Anglican Christian struggled greatly with her husband's loss of faith and adoption of more unorthodox beliefs whilst remaining faithfully committed to him. Jane's struggle with her husband's lack of conventional religious belief, his adoption of Comte's Positivism and his role in the development of the Religion of Humanity,

[62] Lushington to H.G. Seeley. Vernon Lushington Letters, American Philosophical Society, call number B L97. 29 January 1865.
[63] Lushington to Jane Mowatt, 1865. SHC7854/3/1.
[64] Frederic Harrison, *Marriage: A Discourse to the Positivist Society after the Civil Marriage of Frederick Charles Freeman and Faith Flaxman Wright,* 2 April, 1887 (8 Archimedes, 99) Newton Hall.

surfaced early in their marriage subjecting it to some strain. This is revealed in one particularly intense and personal letter to her husband written a few days after their first wedding anniversary. Here Jane writes of how, during a solitary ride in a hansom cab, she held an imaginary conversation with her absent husband in which:

> I talked to you all the way & imagined sweet answers & shall I confess – some little seeing – or trying to see – with my eyes! & I tried to turn a deaf ear to the words "I am going one way & you another." Vernon, Dearest, am I not your wife – haven't I a right – a right to be gloried in – to work with you – rest with you - & highest pleasure of all – to soar with you. This was always my idea of a wife's happiness & if I know nothing of the world you go into – will you never help me to go there.[65]

In this letter Jane bares her heart in what is likely to have been a resurfacing of the "ups and downs" referred to by Lushington in his letter to Seeley. Jane clearly felt that her husband was unable to understand things from her point of view. She finds herself reduced to an imaginary conversation with her husband in which receives "sweet answers" and the hope that he might at least try and see things as she did. This letter is important in that it touches upon some of the fundamental issues at the centre of marriage relationships in the middle years of the nineteenth century. Peterson writes of how most middle class Victorian wives could expect to be the confidantes of their spouses. They were "sympathetic listeners, providing an audience when a man reflected on his work and problems … many women went

[65] Jane to Vernon Lushington, 13 April 1866. SHC 7854/1/2/6.

beyond the roles of confidant and advisor to become active helpers of the men in their lives."[66] It was not unreasonable for Jane to expect her husband to at least try and see things as she did. Nor was it an unreasonable request of Jane to her husband to know something of "the world you go into" if she were to be his confidante.

Jane concludes this remarkable letter:

> I wd. not for all the world have said anything painful to you this mng. & asked you for my greatest fault with only one reason - a real desire to grow more into yr. Love – by trying to alter anything that annoyed you. I felt disheartened yesterday mng. - & knew you didn't know that you were doing it - & as I lay in bed it came over me – I wonder if I ever grieve him without intending or knowing it - & from this sprang my talk – I know you'll think it poor of me my darling to write all this of what is past – but after all "it is the little rift within the lute" – "that by & by will make the music mute" – "& ever widening, slowly silence all" & this [underlined four times] wld. make cheerfulness impossible – so let me sayst all dearest please - & get rid of it so now I'll let you go. I wish I cld. say with Jacob –"I will not let thee go except thou bless me" / "And He blessed him there." Dearest – bless me – love me too - & believe that I am your loving wife.
>
> Jane Lushington
>
> Friday 1/2 past 2 o'clock
>
> Dearest Vernon – my eyes only only opened to see my own name in your dear handwriting – thank you for writing to me – when I had read your letter

[66] Peterson pp. 162-163.

> I hesitated whether I shd. destroy this – but after all my darling – if yours is a "piece of you" then mine is a "piece of me."

Jane's request that her husband share with her what he considered to be her "greatest fault" has overtones of "The Angel in the House" where another Jane complains to her mother that her husband appears not "to notice any faults I've got!" Jane Lushington then forcibly points out to her husband that a marriage with rifts in it will not work. It must be a partnership with mutual responsibilities and, as if to emphasise this, she concludes the letter by plunging into more domestic matters to demonstrate what a joint enterprise should be.

Jane's imaginary conversation with her husband in this first part of this letter has a strong resemblance to that of George Eliot's Dorothea Brooke after her marriage to Edward Casaubon. Both Dorothea and Jane longed to find a place of understanding and sharing with their husbands in the great schemes which preoccupied them. However whereas Dorothea discovers Casaubon's inability to allow his wife access to his great work after they were married, Jane could be said to have accepted her exclusion in the very act of marrying a man committed to Positivism.[67] George Eliot had made a lengthy study of Positivism and the Lushingtons were within her circle of friends. Was it then entirely coincidence that she constructed this narrative six

[67] Dorothea Brooke has also been likened to Beatrice Webb who, like Dorothea longed "desperately for self-development and self-expression, for access to sources of profound and effectual knowledge, for the privilege of contributing to the progress of humanity." Mintz, A. *George Eliot & the Novel of Vocation*, (Harvard University Press, 1978), p.173.

years after Jane wrote this letter?[68] There is also a case for arguing that Edward Casaubon was, at least in part, based on Herbert Spencer who, whilst not totally in agreement with Comte, was undoubtedly influenced by Positivism.

Mrs Ward's Robert Elsmere was, like Lushington, an intellectual, a philosopher and a scholar. Jane, like Catherine Elsmere, was an intuitive, emotional woman with an unquestioning faith. By using the phrase "I am going one way and you another" she was quoting her husband's words back at him. This indicates a serious rift in their relationship undoubtedly created by her husband's unorthodox beliefs. Of course it was open for Jane to join the Positivists as did Godfrey Lushington's wife Beatrice, who travelled with her husband to Paris to attend Positivist gatherings, but Jane's religious beliefs would not allow that. Catherine Elsmere married a man who believes in Christ but whose belief is later seriously damaged by the scientific and secular discoveries of his time. Lushington took his unorthodox beliefs into the marriage and Jane knew full well what she was entering into. Despite having been forewarned, no sooner was the honeymoon period over then Jane was struggling with her husband's religion. When, in the novel, Robert Elsmere finally faces the fact that he can no longer believe in miracles or the divinity of Christ, his first thought was for his wife as he cries out, "Oh God! My wife – my work!" Sadly Jane

[68] In a letter dated 15 May 1877 to Barbara Bodichon George Eliot wrote that she had invited Henry Holmes the positivist violinist and Jane Lushington to visit her. (*The George Eliot Letters* edt. G.S. Haight, Vol. VI, Yale UP, 1975.) Three letters from George Eliot to Jane Lushington, dated 5, 10 and 23 May, were offered for sale in 1938. They are not amongst Eliot's published correspondence and their present whereabouts is not known. *(The George Eliot Letters* Vol. VI, p. 370.) In April 1878 George Eliot and G.H. Lewes lunched at the Tennysons with Jane Lushington and James Knowles. G.S. Haight *George Eliot. A Biography*, (Oxford, 1968), p. 508. Lushington was invited to attend George Eliot's funeral in 1881. (*The New York Times*, 15 January 1881).

Lushington was well aware that her husband's altruism where others came first could mean the reversing of that exclamation.

A letter from Benjamin Jowett, an old friend and mentor of Lushington who occasionally stayed with the family at Ockham Park, to Florence Nightingale provides further evidence of Jane's concern at her husband's unorthodox beliefs.[69] In 1872, seven years into the Lushington marriage, Jowett wrote:

> I go back to Oxford today – having to entertain Mr & Mrs V. Lushington & the B. of Exeter. I am sorry about both of them; they are both in a false position – though they do not see. The Bishop who is really a good & devoted man of great administrative abilities & enormous self confidence – has constituted himself a humbug (yet without the least suspicion of having done so); V. Lushington pursuing after a Will of the wisp idealism has had a chance of the bar & really started & then failed & has had the chance of the Admiralty then failed & has not the stamina for success in him. When this becomes slowly apparent to a man's brother & his wife it is very painful. I suppose that he will talk to me & the only advice that I can give him is to stick to his present position & try to do better.[70]

[69] Florence Nightingale was a cousin of Godfrey Lushington's wife, Beatrice.
[70] Benjamin Jowett to Florence Nightingale, 10 February 1872. Jowett Papers, Group III, Class N, Balliol College Library. The reference to a failed chance at the Admiralty is strange as Lushington successfully held the post of Second Secretary to the Admiralty from 1869 to 1877.

Jowett dismisses Lushington's Positivism as "Will of the wisp idealism" and makes it clear that his philosophic ideals were not helping him in his pursuit of his legal career and that moreover both his brother and wife were both acutely aware of this. Godfrey Lushington, who chose a career in the civil service and became Secretary at the Home Office, deliberately distanced himself from too much public identity with the Positivists in order not to damage his career prospects. The ever practical Jane saw the potential damage that her husband's religious and philosophic beliefs could inflict on his career. She needed a strong partner within the marriage who, by pursuing a successful career in the law, would also be the breadwinner of the family. The fictitious Mrs Wardlaw happily embraced her lot alongside her Positivist husband but not so Jane Lushington who appears reluctant to have Comte's view of women forced upon her.

It is surprising that Lushington did not anticipate the problems that might arise as a result of Jane's exclusion from this important area of his life. Why did he not take heed of the situation? He had witnessed first hand the troubled marriage of Thomas and Jane Carlyle, especially given that Mrs Carlyle had unburdened herself to him some years earlier? On the other hand, perhaps he considered that some personal sacrifice was inevitably required of those who those who, like him, chose public duty over domestic comforts. After sharing Jane Carlyle's confidences in a letter to his friend Joanna Richardson, Lushington adopts a martyr-like attitude as he writes:

> Must it ever be that those who give most to the world are themselves strangers to household joys? Sometimes it is so, not always I hope. Our

> friend Luther had a happy home. But in our time Dickens is another instance; he & Mrs D must have had a sad life of it, yet scarce any writer writes so much of family happiness. On this subject, you may remember that our Lord (whom I perhaps oftenest think of as a Man) gave up all for His ministry & had not where to lay his head."[71]

If an altruistic life style would cost the pleasures of "household joy", how could there be complete unity in the marriage?

In order better to understand the tensions that appear to have emerged in the Lushingtons' relationship it is necessary to define more clearly exactly the Positivist perceptions of the role of women both in society and in the home and how, if at all, they were at odds with Victorian expectations of married women. In many ways the Positivist view was not that dissimilar from conventional nineteenth-century views of where the woman's sphere was considered to be in the home.

An Angel in the House?

In 1854, the same year that saw the publication of the last volume of Comte's *System*, Coventry Patmore published the first volume of "The Angel in the House". Patmore considered the "angel" to be the embodiment of the Victorian feminine ideal: a wife and mother devoted to her children and submissive to her husband. In fact the "angel" image was not altogether typical. Patmore's "angel" was both

[71] Lushington to Joanna Richardson, 4 March 1860. NLS MS.3990 ff.319-323.

idealised and condescending. It led Virginia Woolf to express her need to "kill the Angel in the House".[72] There is much within the lengthy poem that resembles the Positivist view.

> Man must be pleased, but him to please
> Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
> Of his condoled necessities
> She casts her best, she flings herself.[73]

This idea of the dominant or leading role of the husband in the marriage relationship seems remarkably similar to the Positivist view and might be considered common ground between Comte and Patmore. Although there is no evidence that he had read Comte, Patmore did move within Pre-Raphaelite circles and probably knew Lushington. Hammerton writes, "The evangelical emphasis on domesticity elevated motherhood and the moral power of women to a point that was inconsistent with their total subordination. This could not help but feed doubts about the husband's supreme authority."[74] The Positivists also elevated motherhood and the moral power of women but despite such veneration, Comte could not accept them as the intellectual equals of men because he believed that their brains were at a lesser stage of development than men's. Condescendingly Lushington wrote on this point, "This is not their fault, it is their inherited misfortune; it is a state of mental disorder."[75]

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[72] Virginia Woolf, *Killing the Angel in the House: Seven Essays* (London: Penguin 1992)
[73] Coventry Patmore, *The Angel in the House*, Prelude I, The Wife's Tragedy, lines 1-4.
[74] Hammerton, p. 71.
[75] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity* (London: Reeves & Turner, 1886), p. 12.

Patmore's ideal Victorian wife and mother was one devoted to her children and submissive to her husband due to a conscious act of her will. The Positivists saw the wife's submission not simply as a matter of acquiescence on her part but because she was prepared also acknowledged her intellectual inferiority. In other words, choice did not enter into it. It is easy to understand why of all the Christian fathers it was the apostle Paul who featured so prominently in the Positivist Calendar of Great Men, even to the exclusion of the one who founded Christianity. It was St. Paul who endorsed the subordinate role of women as part of a God ordained order. In writing to the early church he stipulated that women must remain silent in church and submit themselves to their husbands for "the husband is head of the wife".[76]

Was then Jane "the angel in the house"? In her early letters to her husband to be, and in many written after their marriage, she does demonstrate attributes similar to those propounded by Patmore.

> She casts her best, she flings herself
> How often flings for nought! And yokes
> Her heart to an icicle or whim.[77]

These lines from Patmore's poem could almost have been written of Jane who in, one undated letter, addresses her husband as "My own dear Governor & Lord". She continues "Dearest the rest of the world are all ghosts – there is only one reality &

[76] Paul's *Letter to the Ephesians*, Chapter 5, v. 23.
[77] Patmore, Prelude I, The Wife's Tragedy, lines 4-6.

that is Vernon Lushington & I am his wife." This is an example of the "benevolent manliness and compliant femininity" in which the female subordination is based on "assumptions of male perfection which were bound to strain credibility."[78]

In another letter, written shortly after their marriage, Jane asks Vernon not to be late home "as it will not do your cold good to be out – when you ought to be having tea with your wife in your own delightful drawing room – bearing with her – loving her - & improving her, (at least so she thinks)." [79] Jane is crying out for the security of her husband's love. However she also appears to recognise that he does possess an intellectual superiority but that this is due to the advantages he has received from his education and not to any Comtean or Darwinian idea of man's intellectual superiority. However there might just be a note of gentle humour in her cry for improvement for had it not been Vernon who had offered to "improve" her in the first place? This idea of a man improving his wife was not unusual in Victorian husbands. Lushington's contemporary Edward Benson, Archbishop of Canterbury, has been cited as just one example of the many Victorian husbands who sought to mould the woman of his choice to his own requirements. "Men who approached marriage in this way were in effect strongly reaffirming their middle class masculine identity."[80] In expressing these sentiments Jane was in every bit "angel in the house".

[78] Hammerton, p. 71.
[79] Jane to Vernon Lushington, 1865 (day and month not given). SHC7854/1/20.
[80] Leonore Davidoff, 'Class and Gender in Victorian England' in *Sex and Class in Women's History*, Judith L. Newton *et* al (London, Routledge, 1983) pp. 17-71, p.26.

However, despite Jane's willingness to cast herself upon her husband and cry for his improvement of her, she remained resolute in the area of her own faith. Jane continued to attend church regularly and observe the Church of England's various ordinances such when she was "churched" after the birth of one of her daughters. Jane also had her way with her three children. The Positivists may have developed their own naming ceremony but Jane was to have none of that and the three girls were all duly baptised according to the doctrines of the established church.[81] Lushington seems happy to have accepted this and duly wrote to his wife regarding the baptism of their youngest daughter Susan:

> "As to the Xtening – I have asked Mr Coder & will be Godfather with pleasure –"Francis Roubillac Conder is his name – and I am well content that Laura Maxwell & Fanny be Godmothers." [82]

After Jane's death Lushington felt at liberty to take responsibility for his daughters' religious education. Susan recorded in her diary, "At 11 Kitty and I went upstairs and did Positivism with Father. We did the whole of the first conversation, which was good for one time. It was chiefly about the aim and objectives of Positivism." [83]

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[81] This was not an unusual situation. "Rare was the male unbeliever within the professional classes who actually reared his children with no religious training or no religious sacraments." Frank M. Turner, *Contesting Cultural Authority. Essays in Victorian Intellectual Life* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 97. T.H. Huxley, despite his dislike the Church of England, permitted his children to be baptized. Leonard Huxley, *The life and letters of Thomas Henry Huxley* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1900), I, p. 240.

[82] Conder was a civil engineer. He appears to have lived in Cheltenham where his son Claude Reignier Conder was born in 1848. It may be that he knew Jane Lushington through the Cheltenham connection.

[83] Susan Lushington's Diary 10 May 1887.

"The true sphere of woman"[84]

In addition to their veneration of women, the Positivists held that they had a special role within the Religion of Humanity. Comte believed that the "moral constitution of man" consisted of intellect, activity and feeling. The intellect was represented by what he called the "philosophic body"; activity by the "proletariat", and feeling by women. "Their (women's) duty will often be to call philosophers and people back to the unity of purpose which originated in the first place with themselves."[85] Women's priestly quality derived from them being in closer touch with the mysteries of nature. They were therefore ideally suited as moral guides because of what he perceived as their innate gentleness.

Because of their special place and priestly role Comte also believed that it was to women's' advantage to be saved from education, declaring that the female sex has never and will never produce any worthwhile art, music or poetry. Here Comte seems to have failed to recognise that any gap in intellectual attainment that might have existed between the sexes might be due to the fact might be due to their exclusion from education. Comte, rather naively, considered that women "cannot fail to be drawn towards a system which regards women as the embodiment of this principle."[86] Clearly Jane Lushington was not one of them.

[84] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 97 – "Surely the true sphere of woman is to provide man with the comforts and delights of home, receiving from him the means of subsistence earned by his labours."
[85] Ibid. p. 161.
[86] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 167.

Lushington's views on the role of women within a Positivist society were set out in a paper which was written in 1879 when his wife was still alive thereby risking causing her offence.[87] He declared:

> The Positivist view of the relation of the Sexes in the future may be summed up in the sentence: Monogamic marriage; the material dependence and the intellectual subordination of the Woman under the Man; the spiritual ascendancy of the Woman over the Man. Or in other words, Man the breadwinner, the thinker, the master: Women the honour & the reigning spirit of the home – Like Monogamy itself, the other conditions as a fact exist widely in modern Society – with the exceptions they prevail. We say they represent the true tradition, the true growth of the race. Positivism seeks to maintain these conditions & improve them but especially to carry forward the moral ascendancy of Woman.[88]

Elsewhere Lushington appealed to history to support the Positivist theory:

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[87] Lushington's views on women were later parodied in a short humorous poem of three verses entitled 'Unnecessary Advice (By Our Own Cynic)' published in *Fun* (May 12, 1886) p.218. The following is the introduction and first verse.

(Mr. Vernon Lushington, Q.C., has lately been preaching to the Positivists on "Woman". Among other things he said Man should support Woman!)

Please note this Positivist attorney
(Preaching on the tender sex
And their share in life's brief journey),
Uttered things that would perplex,
Women are our joys – we court 'em
(Singly, as the laws allow);
This preacher says we should support 'em!
Gracious I don't we do so *now*?

[88] Lushington, *Women*. Manuscript in my possession.

> From the earliest the male sex has qualified for rule, the female disqualified and not alone in matters of war or general government, but of course in the family also. There too the man ruled: in antiquity the woman was his slave, she is still his dependent. …For the average woman is inferior to the average man in stature & bodily strength; she is also inferior to him in those qualities of intellect & character wh. make for rule. Were it otherwise History wd. have an opposite record to show than the record we have. We should find that men had been everywhere enslaved to women, this we do never find.[89]

Jane Lushington had entered the marriage fully aware of her husband's extreme views of the role and place of women. She must have realised the potential for friction within their relationship. However her tacit acceptance was severely strained quite early on her marriage. It has already been noted earlier in this thesis that Jane was concerned about Comte's letters feeling that she was not as liberal minded as her husband.[90] She must have struggled with such dogmatic statements as the following which were aired by her husband from the public platform:

> Positivism affirms these general facts. 1st Woman is inferior to Man in bodily strength – This has not been gainsaid yet. 2nd The intellectual and practical qualities of Women are inferior to those of Men. Greater they can hardly be, or woman would never have been subjected: they would long ago have reduced men to subjection. But is there any reason to think they are equal?

[89] Ibid.
[90] Chapter 5, p. 147.

> On such a point we cannot have precision, but we have certainty. The Positivist conclusion is, that the experience of the Race, the judgement of the Race, & now the feeling of the Race, declare that neither in abstract science, nor philosophy, not art, nor government, not in any of the departments of practice is Woman the equal of man. She is capable in all these directions, & in exceptional instances extraordinarily so, but she has rarely achieved the highest rank in any, moreover in all these provisions of human endeavour the average woman is inferior to the average man.
>
> But now 3rd – in the Social affections the Woman is superior to the Man. This as its terms show is only a relative proposition. Woman shares all the vices of man and in unflavoured conditions, as we know, may become terribly depraved. But the general proposition that Women are better than men, Positivism affirms on the same ground as before – the judgement and feeling of the Race."
>
> The Positivist position: that in the future there should be monogamic marriage, that the Woman shd. be materially dependant under the Man, intellectually subordinate to him, and morally predominant over him.[91]

Lushington called as a supporting witness for his case no lesser expert than his old friend Charles Darwin whose own view of the differences between the sexes seem to strongly reflect those of Comte as the following passage demonstrates:

[91] Lushington, *Women*.

> Man is more courageous, pugnacious & energetic than woman & has more inventive genius. Woman seems to differ from man in mental disposition chiefly in her greater tenderness & less selfishness …. Woman owing to her maternal instincts displays these qualities towards her infants in an eminent degree: therefore it is likely that she shd. often expend them towards her fellow creatures. Man is the rival of other men: he delights in competition, & this leads to ambition which passes too easily into selfishness…Man is more powerful in body & mind than woman.[92]

In Lushington's miscellaneous notes on Darwin which appear to have been made in preparation for a lecture, Lushington frequently collates statements by Comte and Darwin in order to show apparent mutual support for their theories. [93]

Jane was intelligent and talented. Why then, considering their substantially differing views on religion and his Positivist view on women, did she agree to marry him? We can only speculate. Clearly her love was deep and meaningful. Perhaps it was a belief that "the blue waves" of sea of faith would ultimately undermine her husband's idiosyncrasies. Perhaps also she was flattered by the Positivist view of the moral ascendancy of Woman which her husband expressed when he wrote:

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[92] Ibid.

[93] Lushington's ms notes on Darwin are in my possession. Elsewhere in these Lushington wrote "I knew & loved the man & have very tender memories of man … It was my great fortune nearly 20 years ago to be admitted into his family upon terms of familiar friendship; & I had the opportunity from time to time of seeing how he was beloved & honoured in his home circle, & with what good cause." On 6 March 1871 J.F. McLennan wrote to Darwin that he was "going to dine with Vernon Lushington … who is jubilant over your book". Lushington considered that Darwin's "Descent of Man" fully accorded with the Positivist view of the ascent of man. Darwin Correspondence, Cambridge. Letter 7549.

> The Religion of Humanity will recall affection to the order of the Family. It will consecrate the authority of the man & demand of him in very rank the performance of his manlike duties. Women it enthrones in the high & delightful spiritual office in which they have so long & faithful apprenticeship. As in the lovely Medieval Vision, so in the cottage then in real life, not least the man will crown the woman.[94]

However Jane must have struggled with the words of her husband in which he sought to enforce Comte's belief that, "In all kinds of force, whether physical, intellectual, or practical, it is certain that that Man surpasses Woman, in accordance with the general law which prevails throughout the animal Kingdom." Jane was no feminist but to be told that she possessed a weaker intellect must have rankled with her. Jane wanted to be her husband's "chief associate, his most confidential friend, and often his most trusted advisor."[95] Sadly all the time that Jane was unable to accept her husband's beliefs there would be substantial and important areas of his life in which she could not share. What then might Jane reasonably expect from her marriage?

"To rear, to teach"

Comte's view of the inferior intellect of women was not a device used to denigrate the role of women as there was a very positive and essentially practical role for

[94] Lushington, *The State*. Original in my possession.
[95] Speech in the House of Commons, 20 May 1867, quoted in J.A. and Olive Banks, *Feminism and Family Planning in Victorian England* (New York, Schoken, 1964), p. 73.

women within the Positivism. Comte believed that woman's morally superior nature provided her within that sphere a unique role - that of educating her children. Lushington had expressed it thus in a set of verses:

> Her office then to rear, to teach,
> Becoming as is meet & fit
> A link among the days, to knit
> The generations each with each.[96]

A Positivist Society would be attained through moral means and education was the key. Comte and his disciples considered that education "must be entrusted to the spiritual power; and in the family the spiritual power is represented by Woman." Furthermore Comte believed that "as a mother, no less than as wife [a woman's] position will be improved by Positivism. She will have almost exclusively, the direction of household education. Public education given subsequently will be little but a systematic development of that which has been previously given at home."[97] Following Comte, Lushington wrote:

> We would have the Mother always educate her children of both sexes up to puberty … When her sons have reached manhood, they will of course follow their Industrial vocations: they will marry & find new homes: the daughters

[96]Lushington, *Marriage*.
[97] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 178.

> also will marry & find their homes, but her influence of the mother will still continue, combined however now with that of the Wife & daughter.[98]

Although here Lushington is talking about educating within the home which was to continue up to puberty, he may well have had in mind a more general role for women in education outside the home. Two of Lushington's sisters had set up a school at Ockham. A visit to this school in c.1855 led one visitor to write to Barbara Bodichon that it had impressed her most favourably. [99] Alice Lushington went on to become a noted pioneer in female education. She was Lady Principal of the First College for Training Women Teachers opened in 1878, now called the Maria Grey Training College; she later was made Lady Principal of the College for Female Pupil Teachers of the Voluntary Schools in Liverpool, opened in 1881.

In addition to the responsibilities of educating her three daughters, Jane Lushington also carried delegated responsibility for household finance and oversight of the running of the home including the servants. Jane's letters reveal how she was responsible for finding a new home in the country after their marriage and when they eventually took a lease on Pyports in Cobham, it was she who dealt with the Agents and the local tradesmen. She also had oversight of the finances leading her husband several times to feel it necessary to justify certain items of expenditure including loans or gifts to friends and the purchase of what she might have considered,

[98] Lushington, *Women*.
[99] Papers of Barbara McCrimmon, London Metropolitan University, 7BMC/E/11

unnecessary extravagances.[100] Of course she was also responsible for that all important feature of Victorian social life – the dinner party.

Although Lushington's Positivist principles led him to live for others his own family were not excluded and his letters to his wife and, later, to his three daughters, Katherine (better known as "Kitty") born in 1867, Margaret born in 1869, and Susan born in 1870 - show him to have been a loving, caring father. Lushington's career as a barrister and then as a County Court judge inevitably meant long spells away from home. Added to this were the various causes which he chose to champion.

Outside the Home

Despite their belief in the lesser intellect of women and their view that a woman's life should be essentially domestic, the Positivists did not altogether deny that they had an active part to play in public life. George Eliot who came close to joining the Positivists must be considered an exception. In 1854 Lushington had written to Joanna Richardson concerning Florence Nightingale – a lady who was to become related by marriage through her cousin Beatrice Shore who married Vernon's brother Godfrey:

[100] In 1867 Lushington and Richard Litchfield assisted H.G. Seeley who was in financial difficulties at Cambridge with a loan. On the 12 August of that year Lushington wrote to his wife, "And so you will find in my Book, my dear careful, loving & most dear Wife, a cheque of £150 to Mr Seeley and I send you his letter. SHC 7854/3/4. In 1871 Lushington was in Paris for Positivist meetings. He wrote to his wife on 23 September, "we have old Curiosity shops about us without number so that I must remember I have a Wife & 3 children to support." SHC 7854/3/8.

> Florence Nightingale – I won't call her Miss – for she is too worthy & well known for that – there's another example. I have often thought that it was a discredit to our well to do ladies that whilst so many women go forth in the world, some to be teachers – a most honourable office, if we wd. but think about it, & so many hundreds as servants, & other humbly useful creatures – they should sit at home & be content with a little prowling charity & not one step forward, to be heart & hand & life – a minister to others – of course the household & the fireside are woman's ordinary place; & plenty there is to be done & that of a very valuable & beautiful kind; but why no exceptions in high life from Xtian devotedness, when there are so many in the lower ranks from inferior motive. I do honour F. Nightingale very much for her courage & goodness & wish there were many more such.[101]

This letter was written before Lushington had fully adopted Positivism with its views on the role of women. Comte had acknowledged that there "are some women whose career has been altogether exceptional" citing Joan of Arc as an example.[102] Lushington was also later to concede that there could be a role for women outside the confines of the family. In his lecture on Women he explained:

> We do not wish that the influence of Women should be confined to the Family: we desire they may exercise a powerful Civic influence annexed, as it were to their private Life … Such influence will no doubt be mainly

[101] Lushington to Joanna Richardson. No year given but probably 1854. NLS MS.3990, ff.177-80.
[102] *A General View of Positivism*, p. 195.

> indirect, transmitted thro' Husband & Son; but it will also be direct, as in ordinary intercourse beyond the Family, and in private gatherings beyond the Family, and in private gatherings held for the joint purposes of social union and the free interchange of opinions.[103]

How was this to be done? The answer lay in "Positivist salons". This, according to Comte was where women can "with propriety participate in public life". Salons were not a new idea and Comte recognised the importance of their development in eighteenth-century France. However under the new system envisaged by Comte "these meetings will entirely lose their old aristocratic character" which he considered obstructive. But Jane was not a Positivist and although she frequented the fashionable salons and soirees of her women friends, including some of a more intellectual nature such as those of George Eliot, it is unlikely that they were occasions for the promotion or furtherance of Positivism. That was probably left to the weekly dinner parties at which her husband presided and to which not only his Positivist friends were invited but also potential "converts" such as Thomas and Emma Hardy, and Charles Booth the ship owner and social investigator and his wife Mary. Unlike the dull Wardlaws of *Robert Elsmere*, Lushington's Positivist activities did not interfere with the upper class way of life which he and Jane led with its demanding social round and other related pursuits. Jane also found an outlet for her talents through her passion for music. She joined her husband at the musical events organised by the Working Men's' College and joined the London Bach choir where she became a close friend of Jenny Lind.

[103] Lushington, *Women*.

Jane Lushington died suddenly in January 1884. Charles Combe of Cobham Park wrote to his son, "Poor Mrs V Lushington died on Wednesday – she had caught cold at one of the 'Barn' entertainments and could not shake it off."[104] Her husband, daughters, family and friends were devastated by this event. In his time of sorrow Lushington turned to his old Positivist friend Harrison:

> She is gone, leaving me & my dear young children to live on as best we may, without her sweet bodily presence, without her sweet spoken voice, without her sweet daily guidance & help in visible ways. But writing to you, as I do, as sharers with me in the beautiful & true Religion of Humanity, I can affirm that I am upheld in this great sorrow of my life by the deep conviction that the Dead still bless the living. A year ago, as you know, I tried to express this faith & feeling. Little did I think that they were so soon to be proved in my case, even to extremity. According to that faith & feeling I will now strive to live.[105]

Rather than use the usual Christian sentiment of meeting again in heaven, which surely would have been Jane's desire, Lushington chose to express the Positivist conviction of subjective immortality – she would live on their memories.

Left with three daughters in their teenage years, Lushington turned to his old friends the Leslie Stephens. Julia quickly assumed the role of an adoptive mother and despite the pressures of her own family, found time to guide and direct the three

[104] Correspondence of Charles Combe. The Cobham Park archives (private).
[105] Lushington to Harrison. Harrison/1/47 LSE.

girls.[106] When Lushington's eldest daughter Kitty broke off her engagement to Charles Howard it was Julia Stephens who played a leading role in her subsequent engagement and marriage to Leopold Maxse.[107]

For the bereft Lushington the loss of his wife provided an opportunity for what was perhaps the ultimate expression of his Positivism – that of "perpetual widowhood", a principle which he expressed to his daughter Susan:

> Of course as a Positivist I have my own feeling about second marriages, but have to reconcile this with human infirmity, which like Conservative feeling in Zanzibar, is very strong.[108]

True to his word, Lushington, unlike his friend and co-religionist Bridges, never remarried. [109]

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[106] Julia Stephen wrote to Lushington after Jane's death, "I do not feel that Death has any part in her but he has dealt a heavy blow to us." Julia Stephen to Lushington, 25 January 1884. SHC7854/4/1-11.
[107] Charles Howard was the eldest son of Lushington's old friends, George and Rosalind Howard, Earl and Countess of Carlisle. Kitty's engagement to Leopold Maxse took place at the Stephen family's summer residence of Talland House, Cornwall. Virginia Woolf later wrote that it was her first introduction to true love and she later fictionalised the event in *To The Lighthouse*. Kitty was also used as the model for Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*.
[108] Vernon to Susan Lushington, 13th March 1903. SHC 7854/7/3-4. The meaning of Lushington's reference to the "Conservative feeling in Zanzibar" is not known.
[109] Susan Bridges died at an early age from typhoid fever. J.H. Bridges later re-married thereby receiving heavy censure from Congreve who considered that he was flouting Comte's doctrine of eternal widow(er)hood. Vogeler, p. 89.

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"Pre-Raphaelite Relic" or "Red-Hot Comtist"?

– Remembering Lushington

This thesis is not intended to be another theoretical critique of Auguste Comte's Positivism or its impact upon the intellectual and political life of the second half of the nineteenth century. Pickering has now provided a monumental and highly accessible three-volume biography of Comte and there are a number of excellent studies on various aspects of Positivism which are listed in the bibliography. Instead the thesis is a discrete study of the intellectual and spiritual journey of one of Comte's lesser known disciples who, with the assistance of material from the newly emerged archive, can now be recognised as an important figure in his own right through his unique contribution to the development and spread of Positivism and the Religion of Humanity in the second half of nineteenth-century Britain.

The Lushington archive, together with material detached from it which I have traced to a number of public and private collections, has enabled me to study Lushington's journey towards what proved, at least for him, a new understanding of the development of humanity in history. In an age of belief and unbelief Lushington, might be likened to Matthew Arnold, who "slid out of belief in orthodox Christianity at an early age without experiencing any great emotional turmoil."[1] This was aided by the household of easy-going Anglicanism in which he was raised.

During his life Lushington made few, if any, enemies and it has been difficult to find a bad word written about him. Instead, his attractive, engaging and non-threatening personality enabled him to develop a surprisingly large and diverse circle of friends drawn from a wide spectrum of interests. He was one of the few Positivists who had the respect and lasting friendship of four of the most eminent of eminent Victorians – Thomas Carlyle, Charles Darwin, John Ruskin and William Morris. Each of these great men felt at ease with Lushington and were happy to share their homes and their hearts. Through Lushington many leading artists, writers, musicians and intellectuals were brought into contact with Positivism and the Religion of Humanity. Whilst few chose to fully embrace Comte with Lushington's enthusiasm, their work often shows signs of the influences of Positivism. One example is that of Thomas Hardy in whose novel *The Return of the Native* Clym Yeobright returns from Paris where he had become acquainted with "ethical systems popular at the time", and eventually finds a vocation as a preacher delivering "a series of moral lectures." [2] Secure in his new-found *raison d'être*, Lushington spent the remainder of his life using his privileged position within the circles of the intellectual aristocracy to promulgate Comte's new religion and seek out channels through which he could live his life for others.

In his last years Lushington increasingly suffered from prolonged bouts of rheumatism. In search of treatment and relief he made regular visits to Bath and it was during one such visit, on the 24 January 1912, that he died. Susan Lushington

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[1] Stefan Collini, *Arnold* (OUP Pastmasters, 1988), p. 20.
[2] For more on Hardy and Positivism see Wright, pp. 202-217.

immediately wrote to Frederic Harrison informing him that, "Father fell down today week, but it was not thought serious until Monday when he sank into deep unconsciousness and acute bronchitis set in and today at 4 he died so peacefully and gently – and he looks so beautiful."[3] Lushington was buried next to his wife in the churchyard at Pyrford, Surrey. In accordance with his wishes expressed to Susan some years earlier Lushington was buried with a Christian service and the "3 good old well known hymns" chosen by his daughter were also those used at his wife's funeral – "Abide With Me", "Lead Kindly Light" and "Nearer my God to Thee".

It may seem surprising that none of the Positivist hymns written by Lushington were used at the service. This might suggest that Lushington had rejected the Religion of Humanity, or that, in his last years, he experienced some doubts as to the truth of Comte's religion. Was it that as he contemplated his own death he felt the need to keep his options open concerning the possibility of an afterlife? The answer to all these questions is a resounding "no". The Religion of Humanity did not destroy the older religions. They were the forerunners containing partial revelation of the ultimate truth as postulated by Comte.[4] Lushington explained this as follows:

> The Religion of Humanity offers this ideal Being, which unites all human excellence, with goodness necessarily predominating, as the natural centre of affection, all thought, all action. Such religion comes to take the place of the older Religions, now outworn, thus terminating in spiritual union the

[3] Susan Lushington to Frederic Harrison. Harrison/1/47. LSE.
[4] "Positivism embraces all that is valuable in the older religions." "Positivism accepts all the creeds of the past, and in our Pantheon all religious teachers are duly honoured … Positivism aims to be the

> Intellectual Revolution which has been tormenting the European mind for five centuries or more.[5]

Christianity may have been but a partial revelation of the full truth, but it was also part of the whole as set out by Comte.[6] If this were not the case, why did Comte chose to place St Paul in his pantheon of great men. Positivism should, its believers thought, be seen as the culmination of mankind's systems of belief and, as such, was able to include them within its sphere. The Religion of Humanity fulfilled the highest aims of old belief systems.[7] In an article in the *Saturday Review* in 1886 Lushington was taken to task by the columnist who wrote:

> Comtism has plagiarized from the 'worn-out' system it aspires to supersede some excellent rules of conduct, but it leaves out the old 'emotion', assuming itself to be "so completely human, so universal in its sympathies," as Mr Lushington words it, that it has a better one of its own. Perhaps that may help to explain how it comes to pass that now, after some thirty years' trial, "its prospects are still obscure and small."[8]

Lushington's choice of an Anglican funeral may have been partly prompted by a desire not to upset other members of the family who held more orthodox beliefs such

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summation of all that was excellent and true in these previous conceptions." *A Positivist Primer* pp. 18 and 26-27.

[5] Lushington, *The Religion of Humanity*.

[6] *Lead Kindly Light* was included unaltered in a collection entitled *Hymns and Anthems for Use in the Church of Humanity* compiled by the Liverpool Positivists in 1901.

[7] "Some Principles of the Religion of Humanity", *The Positivist Review*, (February 1st 1913), p. 41.

[8] "Three Varieties of Protestant Mysticism", *The Saturday Review* (25 September 1886), 421-422 (p. 422).

as his uncle, Sir Culling Eardley Eardley – a founder of the Evangelical Alliance. However, according to *The Saturday Review*, Lushington had "generously acknowledged on behalf of the new faith 'a perpetual gratitude to all antecedent religions.'"[9] Presumably this, together with his strong aesthetic and sentimental nature, was his reason for the choice of "three old well known hymns" for his funeral - there was no conflict here between Christianity and his new beliefs. Lushington died as he had lived – a Positivist.[10]

Of the next generation it was Lushington's youngest daughter Susan who was probably the most open to Positivism having been taken to meetings at Newton Hall by her father and "catechised" by him in the Religion of Humanity. In 1890 she wrote in her diary:

> I couldn't say I had got nearer Positivism – I think it is obvious – positive – and I even go as far as to say that I think it <u>is the only way to look at things</u> so as to make a general whole – only that at present it is unattractive. Perhaps it is only that I am young - & that I prefer to roam about on the open sea – gleaning all I can - & that I rather hesitate anchoring myself fast – although I see that it is the real harbour and the only one in the end. It is so difficult to say how much influence Christianity still sheds - & has power to shed. One is always coming across it in unexpected places – where it really governs &

[9] Ibid. p. 422.
[10] A Commemoration Service for Lushington was held at the Positivist Society Rooms on February 17, 1912 with an address by Frederic Harrison.

regulates people's lives as mush as Positivism ever hopes to do. [11]

A Failed Cause?

Positivism in England lasted for little more than a generation, dying with those who, like Lushington, had become its disciples. Was the Religion of Humanity just the extraordinary product of a well meaning but eccentric French philosopher which served a purpose in a time of religious upheaval? Should it simply be remembered as a curious phenomenon of its time? Did Positivism leave any legacy? How should Lushington be recognised today and had his belief and his work, and that of his fellow Positivists proved futile?

After his death Lushington soon became a forgotten figure. Such brief posthumous public recognition or remembrance of Lushington as there was always related to one particular chapter of his life. Lady Burne Jones' biography of her late husband recognised Lushington's role in the development of Edward's Burne-Jones' artistic career.[12] In 1941 William Gaunt, aided by Susan Lushington, wrote *The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy* which developed the account of the famous meeting which Lushington had instigated between Burne-Jones and Rossetti. At least Georgina Burne-Jones and William Gaunt recognised Lushington's contribution to nineteenth-century British art. Virginia Woolf's sister Vanessa Bell could only try and consign Lushington to humanity's scrapheap by dismissing him a "Pre-Raphaelite relic".[13] But this must be seen for what it was – a typical "Bloomsbury" dismissive swipe.

[11] Susan Lushington's Diary 1890.
[12] Lady Georgina Burne-Jones, *Memorials of Edward Burne-Jones* (Macmillan, 1912)., pp. 128-129.
[13] Hermione Lee, *Virginia Woolf: A Biography*, Chatto & Windus (1966) p. 144.

Vanessa and her sister Virginia took great pleasure in debunking their father's generation. The Bloomsbury Group was anxious to close the door on the nineteenth century with its unfashionable values and outmoded sentiments. Bell's statement was simply her personal view and not necessarily that of society. Nevertheless it does reinforce the fact that Lushington was being recalled for only one small part of his eventful life and one which linked him to what were by then considered an unfashionable group of artists. Had Lushington's life's work as Positivist been entirely forgotten? Was there a legacy that survived after his death? What of Lushington the altruist who placed humanity before his own wife in his desire to improve society? What of Lushington the passionate evangelist of the Religion of Humanity? Had all that had been so central to his life been forgotten so quickly?

Lushington has not been entirely overlooked by scholars of the nineteenth century but any mention of him is usually confined to an occasional footnote in the lives of others considered more notable, rather than dealing with his own personal achievements. Vogeler was able to partially remedy the situation after she acquired some of Lushington's Positivist papers when they came onto the market some years ago. Her scholarly assessment of Lushington in *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* provides a short summary of his life and refers to him as a disciple of Auguste Comte. However Vogeler was restricted in what she could write as she did not have access to the larger archive from which the Positivist papers were taken.

The availability of the remainder of the Lushington archive has facilitated this reassessment of Lushington both within the context of his remarkable family as well

as within the broader intellectual aristocracy. The archive reveals the true extent of the remarkable network of friends and associates with whom Lushington, either directly or indirectly, shared his Positivist world view. From his correspondence, manuscript lecture notes, and published works Lushington must now be considered as a leading exponent of Positivism and the Religion of Humanity in the second half of the nineteenth century. In addition to providing material for this reassessment of Lushington, the archive is also a valuable source of material for extending our knowledge of other better known names from the nineteenth century and will provide a useful resource for future studies outside the remit of this thesis. [14]

Lushington the Intellectual

The characteristics of the best intellects of the nineteenth century were a questioning mind, theological uncertainty, political liberalism and moral earnestness. Lushington possessed all of these. Despite that, it would be foolish to try and claim a place for him as one of the great minds of his time. Although Lushington may have been on intimate terms with many of the notable men and women of his time, he was not in their league as an original thinker. Instead, to borrow a description of his fellow lawyer, Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, he pursued "an essentially conventional career alongside a broad vigorous intellectual absorption in the great social and political

[14] During the course of researching for this thesis I was invited to lecture to the William Morris Society, the Pre-Raphaelite Society, the Virginia Woolf Society, and the Gaskell Society. I have also given papers on matters related to Lushington and Positivism at conferences at Leeds Trinity and All Saints/ Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies and at Birmingham which have been published and my paper to an international gathering of Carlyle scholars in Dumfries was published in the Carlyle Studies Annual No. 28 (2008). In March 2009 I was invited to the USA to give papers City University New York, the University of Delaware, Villa Nova College and the Grolier Club, New York.

events England was experiencing."[15] Lushington's career can have hardly been more conventional or, indeed, respectable. His legal mind, inherited from his father, gave him an avid, irrepressible sense of analytical enquiry which was coupled with what George Eliot called "an hereditary strain of Puritan energy." [16]

The sociologist Edward Shils considered that the activities of the intellectuals and their situation in society were the product of a compromise between personal drive and the needs of society.[17] Did Lushington make such a compromise? His nature was certainly that of a mediator but in his own life both his personal drive and the needs of society were pursued with equal energy and enthusiasm. Carlyle, the Christian Socialists and Comte - all drove Lushington and deepened his inherited concern for the spiritual, moral and practical needs of the society in which he lived. Successful in maintaining a good balance between his own personal spiritual quest and what he saw as the needs of humanity, Lushington was, in every way, the model of the well-connected Victorian intellectual.

Lushington the "Distributor"

Seymour Martin Lipset has defined intellectuals as "all those who create, distribute, and apply *culture*, that is, the symbolic world of man, including art, science, and religion."[18] Lushington excelled as a "distributor". He played an important, and

[15] K.J.M. Smith, *James Fitzjames Stephen, Portrait of a Victorian Rationalist*, (CUP, 1988), p. ix.
[16] George Eliot, *Middlemarch*, (Penguin Classics, 1994), p. 8.
[17] For further discussion and consideration of Shils' theories on the role of the intellectual in society see T.W. Heyck's *The Transformation of Intellectual Life in Victorian England*, (Croom Helm, 1982), p.14.
[18] Seymour Martin Lipset, *Political Man: The Social Bases of Politics,* (Garden City, NY, 1963), p.

sometimes overlooked, role as a networker *par excellence* who was at ease within the different circles in which the great men of his time moved. Charles Brookfield wrote: "The great men of those days were wonderful, not merely in their works, but in their lives and their friendships. It was not a pose of the time to stand alone in solitary grandeur, or to turn aside the society of the talented, they lived surrounded by intellect and fed upon it, and if that in which they became steeped had not always the nature or calibre of their own genius, it still had something in it that stimulated, and even sometimes assisted to polish their own thoughts."[19] In surrounding himself with some of the greatest intellectual and creative minds of his day, Lushington not only stimulated and polished his own thoughts but also found opportunity to stimulate, polish and assist the thoughts of others. Carlyle generously acknowledged Lushington's assistance not just as an editor but, perhaps more importantly, for his help in revising texts for new editions. Lushington's essay on Carlyle in the Oxford Magazine deserves recognition for its importance as one of the first, full length critiques of Carlyle during his lifetime. Through his lectures at Newton Hall and his published works Lushington not only aided the distribution of Comte's Positivism, but he also sought to explore, explain and even at times criticise the Master.

Comte's Religion of Humanity was primarily expressed in the doctrine of altruism. Dixon writes how "the language of altruism" was "physically spread from one place to another, carried and transmitted through direct human contact as well as through the mediation of the printed word."[20] It was altruism that "led Victorian Christians to

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[19] C.H.E. & F.M. Brookfield, *Mrs Brookfield and Her Circle* (London, 1906) p. 504.

[20] Dixon, p. 44.

defend and reformulate their own belief about death, judgment, heaven, and hell."[21] Lushington's ability to excel in what would today be called "social networking" made him one of the leading carriers of the language of altruism. With the exception of Vanessa Bell, it has not been possible to find a bad word spoken of him, from his days at Cambridge when he was "one of the jolliest men in Trinity", "earnest and enthusiastic" with "nothing of narrowness or bigotry in his composition" to his death when Frederic Harrison recalled him as having "lived through nearly the period of fourscore years, full of accomplished work and surrounded with love and honour."[22]

Charles Darwin's daughter, Harriett Litchfield wrote of him that "it was his distinguishing trait that he always saw the best in people, and they were thus led to be at their best in his company." [23]

Lushington the Activist

By a quirk of history, some 250 years before Lushington chose Pyports in Cobham as his country home, another resident of the Surrey village, Gerrard Winstanley, had famously written, "Words and Writings were all Nothing and must Die, for Action is the Life of all and if thou dost not Act, thou dost Nothing."[24] In addition to being a "distributor", Lushington was most certainly an activist in the spirit of Winstanley. Whether it was assisting Elizabeth Gaskell to relieve the plight of the Manchester

[21] Ibid. p. 116.
[22] The Positivist Review, 1 April 1912, p. 93.
[23] The Working Men's College Journal, Vol. XII, No. 223, March 1912, p. 271.
[24] These words of the Digger leader Gerrard Winstanley, a resident of Cobham in the middle of the seventeenth century, are from his *A Watch-word to the City of London, and the Army* (1649). Winstanley is now considered by many as a forerunner of the Christian Socialists of the nineteenth

cotton operatives, giving his time freely to teach at the Working Men's College, or helping the trade unionists to develop cohesive policies which led to a unity not previously experienced, Lushington sought out every opportunity to put words into action. Even so, what the Positivist deemed as "action" was quite different from that which William Morris and his fellow socialists had in mind - the "revolution" discussed by Morris and Lushington on the latter's visit to Kelmscott.

It has been suggested that one of the attractions of Positivism was that it offered the intellectuals a prospect of power without office; of ideological leadership without administrative responsibility.[25] In fact Comte had gone as far as warning his followers to avoid parliamentarianism. It may well have been that lack of political power that actually hindered the implementation of Positivist philosophy. Comte was certainly eclipsed by Marx whose doctrines were able to serve immediately on the platform of a philosophy. Comte may have been a far more comprehensive thinker than Marx but he left no answer to the great question of where do we go from here?

Despite the fact that, in 1871, the Positivists were being denounced as the "most dangerous revolutionaries of any age or nation" [26] but their "revolution", like the message of Christianity, was aimed at changing hearts and minds rather than a political upheaval. It was summed up by Lushington when he wrote that the objectives of the Positivists was "To order our own hearts & minds & habits, to set

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century.
[25] Harrison, p. 262.
[26] *Our Own Reds*, Pall Mall Gazette, 15 April 1871.

forth the Religion of Humanity, & make others see it, feel it, understand it, and mind by mind, family by family, accept it, - there is our chief field now & for long years to come." But peaceful though that revolution might be, it was to be all encompassing. In his lecture on "The State" Lushington declared, "None can say that Positivism is timid in speculation. We seek a total regeneration in religion, in government, in art, science, education, in industry, in social domestic & personal life. But it is the same in domestic policy. Against us are two camps, the theological & the metaphysical, the retrograde & the revolutionists, bitter internecine rivals."[27]

In Lushington's eyes theology and metaphysics were the enemies of the advancement of humanity. He called them "the retrograde & the revolutionists, bitter internecine rivals."[28] Presumably this is why he chose not to join a number of his friends such as Dean Stanley, Ruskin, Maurice, Tennyson, George Grove, Lesley Stephen, and his cousin Edmund Lushington in the Metaphysical Society which James Knowles had founded in 1869. This was a forum for debate on issues which included "the logic of the sciences whether physical or social" and "the existence and personality of God". Given that Comte taught that mankind was emerging from the metaphysical into the positive and third and final stage, it is strange that Frederic Harrison was also a member of the Society, taking part in a number of the debates. Perhaps Harrison saw this as a means of introducing Comtean ideas into the Society's debates. However Lushington appears to have been more circumspect, choosing not to fraternise with the enemy camp.[29]

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[27] Lushington, *The State*.
[28] Ibid.
[29] For more on the Metaphysical Society see A.W. Brown's *The Metaphysical Society: Victorian*

The Positivists might not have achieved the "total regeneration" that they sought. However the fact that they did achieve success in their "quiet revolution" through their active support for the Trade Union leaders which led Royden Harrison to comment that the Positivists "have done so much to determine the shape of social thought and legislation in England in the nineteenth century."[30] In a sense Positivism did not die. Instead it experienced its own doctrine of subjective immortality. Its ideas lived on in the ideas of others such as the social reformer Charles Booth.

Lushington the Positivist

Intellectual, distributor, activist, influencer - Lushington was all of these but to what purpose? Above all Lushington was a man with a mission that was rooted in his unwavering belief in the philosophy of Comte and his Religion of Humanity.

Thomas Carlyle, a man often berated for his own religious beliefs or lack of them, considered that what he called "the chief fact" with regard to a man was his religion. By "religion" Carlyle meant "not the church-creed, which he professes, the articles of faith which he will sign and, in words or otherwise, assert … but the thing a man does practically believe … the thing a man does practically lay to his heart, and know for certain, concerning his vital relations to this mysterious Universe, and his duty and destiny there, that is in all cases the primary thing for him, and creatively determines all the rest. That is his religion; or, it may be, his mere scepticism and non-religion: the manner it is in which he feels himself to be spiritually related to the

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Minds in Crisis, 1869-1880, (New York: Columbia U.P., 1947).

Unseen World or No-World."[31] What lay at the heart of Lushington found its expression in Positivism and the Religion of Humanity.

Unlike many of his contemporaries who experienced a complete loss of faith, Lushington's conviction was that there was an alternative to outdated belief systems. In 1870, when acknowledging, a copy of Sedley Taylor's pamphlet *The System of Clerical Subscription* – a publication that was highly critical of much of the dogma of the Church of England - Lushington wrote to the author that he felt the pamphlet's "one conclusion is that certain things (Articles &c) are not to be believed".[32] However negative conclusions were not the answer for Lushington and, unable to resist the temptation to take the debate further, he added "But the great question everywhere is What is to be believed?"[33]

But for Lushington the question by then was likely to have been of a rhetorical nature. Positivism was providing the answers and, in the manner of a doctor prescribing treatment for a malaise, Lushington concluded his letter to Sedley Taylor with the suggestion that he should "try a course of Positivism."[34]

Others such as Lushington's friend George Eliot, when faced by a crisis of faith, found that Unitarianism met their spiritual needs. J.R. Seeley, who in his controversial *Ecco Homo*, sought to reconcile the Positivist faith in science and the

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[30] Harrison, p.251.
[31] Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-Worship and The Heroic in History*, (Chapman & Hall, 1853), p. 186.
[32] Lushington to Sedley Taylor, 18 January 1870. University Library, Cambridge.
[33] Ibid.
[34] In a postscript to this letter Lushington recommends that Comte's *Philosophie Positive* "is the book to begin with."

conception of a Church of Humanity with Christianity seen as an international ethical society, was even able to remain within the established church whilst emphasising the humanity of Christ.[35] Why did Lushington not choose this option? Thomas Hardy quite reasonably noted that:

> If Comte had introduced Christ among the worthies in his calendar it would have made Positivism tolerable to thousands who, from position, family connection, or early education, now decry what in their heart of hearts they hold to contain the germs of a true system. It would have enabled them to modulate gently into the new religion by deceiving themselves with the sophistry that they still continued one-quarter Christians, or one-eight, or one-twentieth, as the case might be: This as a matter of *policy*, without which no religion succeeds in making way.[36]

The Positivist leader, Malcolm Quin, who established the Church of Humanity in Newcastle upon Tyne, took up Hardy's theme when he later criticised Comte's omission of Christ from the calendar, for the figure of Jesus, a product of man's religious imagination, had been of great importance in human history.[37] Comte's reason for the omission of Jesus actually caused considerable discussion amongst members of the Positivist Society in 1848. Initially, in his proposed Positivist Calendar, Comte devoted Saturday to Jesus and Sunday to Mohammed. But placing them in the same week caused so much debate that at the end Comte exclaimed,

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[35] Wormell, p. 22.
[36] Florence Emily Hardy, *The Life of Thomas Hardy*, 1840-1928, (Macmillan & Co., 1962), p. 146.
[37] Wright, p. 260.

"Because he (Jesus) made himself God, let him remain so."[38] Comte then excluded Jesus from the subsequent editions of the Calendar. It is true that the religion of Humanity did accept the humanity of Jesus and "the pathetic beauty of his character." It also "accepts the secret charm of the Gospel" but Lushington, like Harrison, rejected its "extravagances and absurdities" and "reverently using modern criticism [sought] to disentangle the chaff from the grain."[39]

Wright has asserted that the Religion of Humanity catered "for a clientele which could no longer muster belief in traditional Christianity but could not survive without some sort of faith."[40] Furthermore Wright believes that such a religion merely "offered a comforting fiction in the face of a hostile and meaningless universe."[41] This was hardly true of Lushington and his fellow Positivists who believed exactly the opposite. Positivism explained and gave meaning to the universe. It was only the absence of any faith that made the universe "hostile and meaningless".

The journalist Justin McCarthy recognised the powerful influence of the Positivists as early as 1868 when he told readers of the monthly *Galaxy* that "A small drawing room would assuredly hold all the London Positivists … yet I do not hesitate to say that they have already become a power which no one, calculating on the chances of any coming struggle, can afford to leave out of consideration."[42] Towards the end of

[38] Auguste Comte to Henry Dix Hutton, October 17, 1853. Quoted in Pickering's *Auguste Comte* Vol. 1, p. 466.
[39] Frederic Harrison, *Neo-Christianity*, The Positivist Review, 1st March 1912.
[40] Wright, p. 4
[41] Ibid p. 21
[42] Quoted in Christopher A. Kent, "Higher Journalism and the Promotion of Comtism", in *Victorian*

the century Lushington confidently expressed his belief in the future of Positivism when he wrote:

> By the light of the great hopes that belong to our Faith, we may see in other centuries mighty cities far and wide rejoicing on this day with all the splendour and beauty that the religious art of the future may command. It is well to think of this, for without such hope we have, as a spiritual body, no title to exist.[43]

The Positivist movement reached its organisational peak in 1898 with nine groups and about 250 members.[44] This is a remarkably low number given the influence that Positivism had generally. But Positivism was not primarily concerned with numbers. It could be likened to the moral re-armament movement of the twentieth century through which a small committed group influenced a very large number of influential world leaders. In the year that Congreve died it is said that the leaders of the Committee appear to have lost interest in it as an organisation fairly quickly.[45] By 1909 the Irish Positivist and lawyer Henry Ellis, wrote to Lushington, "I am not happy about the progress of the Positivist Movement here. Some of the younger men are leaning towards Socialism, & possessed by the female suffrage craze. I look back with regret to the old Newton Hall days when we were all, more or less, united

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Periodicals Review Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer, 1992), pp. 51-56.

[43] Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity*.

[44] *Notes on the Origins and History of the London Positivist and the English Positivist Committees*, 31st May 1974, Document A, Agendum 4, Administrative Committee, Auguste Comte Memorial Lectureship Trust. This typed document is with the Frederic Harrison papers in the archives of the LSE.

[45] Ibid.

as to the doctrines which constituted Positivism."[46] In England the Comtist movement declined with its founders. Despite this numerous people came into contact with and where influenced in some way by them.

Contrary to Lushington's unwavering belief that future centuries would come to embrace Comte and Positivism, this never happened and as the twentieth century entered its second decade Positivism and the Religion of Humanity were almost a thing of the past.[47] In the Positivist Primer, in reply to the question "What is the present position of Positivism throughout the world? What prospect is there of a recognition of the religion of Humanity?" The answer was:

> On this subject we have no illusions. It will be many years before Positivism, as a religion, receives its due recognition; we see it however, asserting itself in unexpected quarters; it is spontaneous in our modern civilization. As yet, the numbers who adhere to what may be called the extreme statement of the faith, are very few; I doubt if there are two hundred persons in the whole world who could honestly say they accepted all of Comte's teachings on this subject; but outside of that two hundred are tens of thousands who are, to a greater or less extent, adherents, and outside of those thousands are hundreds of thousands who accept the philosophy while rejecting the religion, because not yet understanding it. In our view, those who accept the Positive Philosophy, or who take any part whatsoever in the scientific movement of

[46] Henry Ellis to Vernon Lushington, 2 January 1909. SHC7854/6/1/25.
[47] The Newton Hall and Chapel Street Positivist group, both much depleted, re-united in 1916. The membership continued to dwindle and the *Positivist Review* ceased publication in the following year.

> the age, are on the road to complete Positivism; it is simply a question of time.[48]

However, in Martha Vogeler's words, London Positivism "faded into a colourless humanism which, if it did not arouse the same degree of ridicule that once greeted the orthodox teachings at Newton Hall and the old Chapel Street centre, also failed to win followers remotely comparable in number or quality." [49]

Why did Positivism not survive? Royden Harrison wrote:

> The English Positivists aspired to establish a Church, but in their effective influence they never became more than a ginger group. Valuing no vocation as highly as that of priest or teacher, they became men of affairs. Believing that redemption could only come through a vast change in hearts and minds, they worked a modest change in law and opinion. It was almost despite themselves that they came to occupy a kind of 'middle' ground between the Utilitarians and the Fabians.[50]

Positivism may have seemed to answer the problems of the day; especially the critique of contemporary Anglicanism, but Socialism offered a more direct course of action.

The church was abandoned finally in 1933 when the lease on the Chapel Street could not be renewed. *Notes on the Origins and History of the London Positivist and the English Positivist Committees.*

[48] *A Positivist Primer* pp. 110-11.

[49] Vogeler p. 373.

[50] Royden Harrison, *Before the Socialists: Studies in Labour and Politics 1861*-1881 (Aldershot: Gregg Revivals, 1994), p. 254.

In one sense the Religion of Humanity turned out to be a failure. Instead of Comte becoming the first positivist "Pope", he died in extreme poverty. Comte tried to produce a catechism without supernatural beliefs leading one historian to comment: "The problem with Comte's positivist religion is that few people with religion would want one without God and few people without God want a religion."[51] George Bernard Shaw dismissed Comte's Utopia, as being "unlike most Utopias, was so unattractive that one shuddered at its practicability."[52] However, despite Positivism's failure to survive as a system it did leave a legacy through the large number of people who were influenced by it in some way, such as the Fabians Annie Besant and Sydney Oliver who considered Comte to be "very much the most comprehensive thinker we have had since Aristotle."[53] Royden Harrison believed that "Positivism contributed to the Socialist revival of the 'eighties. It is exceedingly difficult to find a Socialist of this period who was quite uninfluenced by it."[54] Lushington was undoubtedly one of those who exercised his influence on his friend Charles Booth, the philanthropist and social reformer whose monumental work *The Life and Labours of the People of London* became a base and a model for Fabian Society tracts and was also used by General William Booth of the Salvation Army in his book *In Darkest London.*[55]

It is possible to find echoes of Positivism and the Religion of Humanity in other areas of belief such as when, in November 1895, G.E. Moore, a Cambridge Apostle,

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[51] Kennedy, p. 79.
[52] Royden Harrison, p. 339.
[53] M. Oliver, *Letters and Selective Writings of Sydney Oliver*, 1948, p. 62.
[54] Royden Harrison, p. 333.
[55] Ibid. p.158. Susan Lushington recorded in her diary in November 1892 that the Booths had stayed with the Lushingtons at Pyports. She commented "There is no one in the world like Mrs Booth & I

gave a paper to the Sunday Essay Society on aesthetics in which he concluded that "a man is essentially more beautiful than a tree, because his nature, as emotion, is higher'; and that the highest forms of human emotions were expressed in works of art. In short Moore had, like Newman, reached the conclusion by 1895 that it was in art and beauty rather than in Christianity or in science that moral meaning were to be found."[56] This sounds very close to Positivism.

But it was not just in politics and social action that Lushington and his fellow Positivists exercised their influence. As Cashdollar has shown, Positivism had a major impact upon nineteenth-century theology causing a reshaping of the Protestant churches that is still with us today.

The doctrine of subjective immortality, or assimilation, might also be considered another legacy of Positivism. Indeed, this could well be a philosophy for the modern world where faith is being questioned. Comte had written: "To live in others is, in the truest sense of the word, life. Indeed the best part of out life is passed thus."[57] In a recent newspaper interview Professor Stephen Hawking was asked "Do you have faith in any conventional sense of the word? And what happens to us when we die?" Hawking, with the aid of his talking screen, replied: "Do I have faith? I have no faith in fairy stories of the afterlife. I think that when we die, we return to dust. But there's a sense in which we live on, in our influence, and in our genes that we pass

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am devoted to them all. Mr Booth was talking most interestingly about the Labour Commission."
[56] Dixon, p. 331.
[57] Comte, A., *General View of Positivism*, Reeves & Turner (1880), p. 255

on to our children." [58] Could there be a more twenty-first century positivistic statement? Perhaps then Positivism has not died but, instead, has, as suggested by Wright, experienced its own form of subjective immortality or assimilation through its ideas living on in the ideas of others.[59]

Incorporation into Humanity

Vanessa Bell's description of Lushington as a "Pre-Raphaelite Relic" was both bigoted and narrow, focusing as it did only upon one aspect only of his life. Lushington played a unique role in the development of a philosophy which had a considerable, albeit subtle, impact upon the intellectual society of his day. It may have formed no political party but the Religion of Humanity gave inspiration and direction to many. Lushington's tangible legacy is difficult to assess. He was not destined primarily to make his mark through his own original thought or action. Instead his legacy must be sought and found in the lives of many of his friends and associates such as Charles Booth who came under his influence. As one of the chief protagonists of Positivism Lushington must now receive proper recognition for his place within the development of the intellectual and political life of this country in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Today Positivism and the Religion of Humanity appear eccentric, bizarre and difficult to follow. Difficult also is it for us to believe that a man of Lushington's intelligence should have adopted such a philosophy. But Lushington was a man of

[58] *The Times on Saturday*, 8th September 2007.

his time and was not prepared to cling to what he considered to be outdated philosophies and beliefs. He was ready to accept the challenges that faced his generation. He sought a way out of the moral maze presented by the crisis of faith and chose not to settle for what Harrison had called "Neo-Christianity", the watered-down and revised version of a two thousand year old faith that was being offered by the so-called Broad Church. Instead Lushington chose to pioneer the Religion of Humanity thereby risking ridicule, social ostracism, and tensions in his marriage.

In 1877 Charles Row attacked the followers of Comte when he wrote: "These modern times have set up a phantom called the religion of humanity, whose great moral principle is altruism, or the sacrifice of self to the idea of human nature … a mere Caricature of Christianity. But it is powerless! Where is its army of self sacrificers?"[60] Clearly Rowe had never met Vernon Lushington for whom the altruistic impulse lay at the very core of his being.

Others in the nineteenth century approached the followers of Comte in a more light-hearted manner, such as the satirist Mortimer Collins who wrote:

> Life and the universe show spontaneity;
> Down with ridiculous notions of Deity!
> Churches and creeds are all lost in the mists:
> Truth must be sought with the Positivists.

[59] Wright, p.273.

Wise are their teachers beyond all comparison,

Comte, Huxley, Tyndall, Morley and Harrison:

Who will adventure to enter the lists

With such a squadron of positivists? [61]

From this study Lushington has emerged from the shadows as a key figure within the development of Positivism in nineteenth-century England and all that sprung from it. It can now also be seen that he played an important role in the development of the arts and social action. It is now time to enter his name on the "lists" to take his place among Collins' "squadron of positivists". Lushington was no "Pre-Raphaelite relic"; instead he should be more correctly remembered in the words of one who knew him well during his lifetime – Charles Darwin – as "a red-hot Comtist, lawyer & able man."[62] Lushington stands alongside other leading members of the English Comtist group such as Frederic Harrison and, like him, "deserves credit in spite of all his advantages, for the considerable achievement of living a life that exemplified the individual integrity which was central to the Comtist prescription for social regeneration."[63]

The last of the Positivist sacraments was that of Incorporation – an act similar to

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[60] C.A. Rowe, *Christian Evidences Viewed in Relation to Modern Thought*, (London, 1877).
[61] Mortimer Collins, *The British Birds. A Communication from the Ghost of Aristophanes*. (Richard Bentley & Son, London, 1878), p. 47.
[62] Charles Darwin to Thomas Huxley. Janet Browne, *Charles Darwin. The Power of* Place, (Jonathan Cape, 2002) p. 297. Lushington would not have been happy with Darwin's use of the term of "Comtist". In distancing himself from Comte the man and his human failings, Lushington wrote "We are not Comtists, though many in their ignorance often call us so. We own the Religion of Humanity which Comte taught us." (Vernon Lushington, *The Worship of Humanity*, Reeves and Turner, London, 1886 p. 10). Lushington always referred to himself as a Positivist.
[63] Kent, p. 159.

beatification in the Roman Catholic Church. The Positivists may have denied the existence of an after life, but they still offered the promise of immortality through the process whereby faithful servants of Humanity are posthumously incorporated into the immortal body of Humanity. Incorporation was after a period following death and required a favourable judgement by surviving peers. If the Church of Humanity had survived as anticipated by Lushington, he would surely be honoured as such for both his exemplary life and his commitment to Positivism.

The form of the Positivist Memorial Service for Lushington has not survived. However it would not be inappropriate to end with some verses by Lushington entitled “Burial”.

When one we living held most dear
Lies mute in death,
And heart and home and life are drear,
What comforteth?

Love that recalls with loving skill
The sacred face,
The lovely life, the noble will,
And tender grace.

Love of dear friends who live, and those
Who rest in peace;

Love which would all the past inclose,

And future race.

For in the Choir Invisible

The loved ones sing:

Still they live here, still with us dwell,

And blessing bring.

Such glorious Faith unto the end

Upholds us well,

While at the grave we bid our Friend

The last farewell.

Illustrations

Between 213 & 214	“A Chapter on the History of Strikes”. A Letter to Vernon Lushington from Alfred Warterhouse.
Between 224 & 225	First page of Lushington’s lecture on Art.
Between 247 & 248	Cover of Lushington’s “Mozart: A Commemorative Address”.
Between 252 & 253	Cover of Lushington’s “Shakespeare”.
Between 256 & 257	Extract from Lushington’s notes on Walt Whitman.
Between 259 & 260	Extract from Lushington’s notes on William Morris.
Between 277 & 278	“Positivist Hymns” by Vernon Lushington, 1885.
Between 284 & 285	“The Home Quartet” by Arthur Hughes.
Between 301 & 302	Extract from letter from Vernon Lushington to Jane Mowatt on the eve of their wedding.
Between 306 & 307	Jane Lushington by D.G. Rossetti.
Between 315 & 317	Extract from letter from Jane to Vernon Lushington . “I am going one way and you another”.
Between 327 & 328	Lushington notes on Charles Darwin.
Between 330 & 331	Mrs Lushington with her daughters Catherine, Margaret & Susan
Between 336 & 337	Vernon Lushington in old age.
Between 340 & 341	Hymn Sheet from Vernon Lushington’s Funeral.

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